

EXHIBITION NOTES

RETHINKING THE ROMANS

NEW VIEWS OF ANCIENT SCULPTURE



CHECKLIST OF THE EXHIBITION

Exhibition entries in
chronological order

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p>1 PORTRAIT OF AUGUSTUS
27–10 BC
Marble (probably Parian);
h. 9 9/16 in. (24.3 cm.)
w. 8 in. (20.4 cm.)
d. 6 7/8 in. (17.5 cm.)
Museum Appropriation Fund
Acc. no. 26.160
Provenience: probably
from Italy
Ridgway, B. S. <i>Catalogue of
the Classical Collection,
Museum of Art, Rhode Island
School of Design: Classical
Sculpture</i>. Provenience: 1972
(hereafter, Ridgway 1972),
cat. no. 32</p> <p>2 FRAGMENT FROM A VASE
early first century AD
Marble; h. 12 in. (30.5 cm.)
w. 6 1/16 in. (15.4 cm.)
d. 2 7/8 in. (7.4 cm.)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Henry
D. Sharpe
Acc. no. 26.270
Provenience: unknown;
ex. coll. Florence Koehler
Ridgway 1972, cat. no. 29</p> <p>3 PORTRAIT OF A
JULIO-CLAUDIAN
early first century AD
Marble; h. 14 1/4 in. (36.4 cm.)
w. 8 13/16 in. (22.4 cm.)
d. 9 1/2 in. (24.1 cm.)
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke
Acc. no. 22.211
Provenience: unknown
Ridgway 1972, cat. no. 31</p> | <p>4 PORTRAIT OF AGRIPPINA
THE YOUNGER
ca. AD 40
Marble set in a baroque
Scagliola bust of the early
18th century;
h. bust 20 1/8 in. (51.2 cm)
h. head 12 in. (30.5 cm)
w. 8 3/4 in. (22.2 cm)
d. 9 1/4 in. (23.7 cm)
Gift of Mrs. Murray S.
Danforth
Acc. no. 56.097
Provenience: unknown
Ridgway 1972, cat. no. 33</p> <p>5 MALE FIGURE
first century AD
Marble; h. 44 7/8 in. (114 cm.)
w. 21 1/2 in. (54.6 cm.)
d. 12 1/2 in. (31.8 cm.)
Museum Appropriation Fund
Acc. no. 26.159
Provenience: unknown
Ridgway 1972, cat. no. 13</p> <p>6 BENCH SUPPORT
first century AD
Marble; h. 14 7/8 in. (37.4 cm.)
w. 17 9/16 in. (44.6 cm.)
d. 3 1/16 in. (7.8 cm.)
Museum Appropriation Fund
and Special Gift
Acc. no. 23.352
Provenience: unknown
Ridgway 1972, cat. no. 46</p> <p>7 CINERARY URN
first century AD
Marble; h. 18 3/16 in. (46.2 cm.)
w. 12 3/16 in. (31 cm.)
d. 12 1/8 in. (30.8 cm.)
Gift of Marshall H. Gould
Acc. no. 46.083 a–b
Provenience: from a necropolis
near the basilica of St. Paul
on the Via Ostiense, Rome
(tomb IV E)
Ridgway 1972, cat. no. 44</p> <p>8 HEAD OF AN AMAZON
AD 70–90
Marble; h. 10 in. (25.3 cm.)
w. 8 3/4 in. (22.4 cm.)
d. 10 1/4 in. (26.1 cm.)
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke
Acc. no. 01.005
Provenience: unknown
Ridgway 1972, cat. no. 12</p> | <p>9 PORTRAIT OF A BOY IN
THE GUISE OF A DEITY
late first/second century AD
Marble; h. 7 in. (17.8 cm.)
w. 6 in. (15.2 cm.)
d. 6 5/8 in. (16.9 cm.)
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke
Acc. no. 03.009
Provenience: found in Italy
Ridgway 1972, cat. no. 20</p> <p>10 TORSO OF A
FIGHTING GIANT
AD 117–138
Marble; h. 21 in. (53.3 cm.)
w. 14 in. (35.5 cm.)
d. 8 5/8 in. (22.1 cm.)
Museum Appropriation Fund
Acc. no. 25.064
Provenience: unknown
Ridgway 1972, cat. no. 25</p> <p>11 MALE FIGURE IN THE
GUISE OF HERMES
early second century AD
Marble; h. 36 1/2 in. (92.6 cm.)
w. 16 3/8 in. (41.3 cm.)
d. 11 1/4 in. (28.8 cm.)
Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke
Acc. no. 03.008
Provenience: said to be
from Italy
Ridgway 1972, cat. no. 16</p> <p>12 YOUTHFUL FIGURE
WEARING A TORQUE
AD 138–192
Marble; h. 18 11/16 in. (47.5 cm.)
w. 10 1/8 in. (25.7 cm.)
d. 8 5/8 in. (21.8 cm.)
Museum Appropriation Fund
Acc. no. 26.158
Provenience: unknown
Ridgway 1972, cat. no. 36</p> <p>13 FEMALE FIGURE
second century AD, after a
fifth-century BC prototype
Marble; h. 37 3/4 in. (95.8 cm.)
w. 14 15/16 in. (38 cm.)
d. 8 15/16 in. (22.7 cm.)
Museum Appropriation Fund
and Special Gift
Acc. no. 23.351
Provenience: unknown
Ridgway 1972, cat. no. 14</p> | <p>14 HEAD OF A SATYR
GRASPED BY THE HAIR
ca. AD 150
Marble; h. 10 5/8 in. (27.2 cm.)
w. 6 15/16 in. (17.7 cm.)
d. 6 3/4 in. (17.2 cm.)
Museum Appropriation Fund
Acc. no. 26.165
Provenience: unknown
Ridgway 1972, cat. no. 23</p> <p>15 FRAGMENT FROM
A SARCOPHAGUS
ca. AD 200
Marble; h. 7 in. (17.6 cm.)
w. 8 in. (20.4 cm.)
d. 3 11/16 (9.3 cm.)
Gift of Miss Charlotte F. Dailey
Acc. no. 02.004
Provenience: unknown
Ridgway 1972, cat. no. 40</p> <p>16 RESTORATION OF LEGS,
SUPPORT, AND BASE
FOR MALE FIGURE IN
THE GUISE OF HERMES
18th century
Marble and plaster;
h. 34 1/2 in. (87.6 cm.)
w. 21 1/4 in. (54 cm.)
d. 16 in. (40.6 cm.)
Museum Collection
Separated from ancient
fragment <i>Male Figure
in the Guise of Hermes</i>
(acc. no. 03.008) in 1953</p> |
|--|---|--|---|

RETHINKING THE ROMANS

NEW VIEWS OF ANCIENT SCULPTURE

This gallery guide has been created to accompany the exhibition *Rethinking the Romans: New Views of Ancient Sculpture* at the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). The installation presents RISD's exceptional Roman sculpture collection in light of new scholarship, which stresses meaning, use, and context within Roman culture.

Traditionally, Roman marble sculptures of mythological figures and other ideal subjects have been considered purely mechanical copies of earlier Greek originals. This has reinforced a deeply held view that Roman artists lacked the creativity of their Greek predecessors. The last two decades, however, have seen the wholesale reassessment of this belief. One of the leading proponents of the reinterpretation of Roman sculpture is Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway, who authored the catalogue of RISD's classical sculpture in 1972. Her Jerome Lectures, delivered in 1981 at the University of Michigan and in 1982 at the American Academy in Rome (collected and published as *Roman Copies of Greek Sculpture: The Problem of the Originals*. Ann Arbor: 1984), showed that attempts by scholars to find lost Greek "originals" behind the many extant Roman "copies" in fact may have been unproductive. Professor Ridgway, and other scholars, have made a clear case for the necessary consideration of Roman sculpture in light of its uniquely Roman aspects, particularly context and function. The new thinking also explores the concepts of imitation and emulation, themes that apply not only to these "copies," but to portraits, historical reliefs, and sarcophagi, works touted as being among the Romans' greatest and most original contributions to art. RISD's collection, famous in national and international scholarly circles, aptly demonstrates these recent debates, which have brought a new understanding of Roman sculpture, and, in turn, a reinterpretation of RISD's pieces themselves.

The gallery guide includes six short essays. The first offers a history of RISD's Roman sculpture collection, which was largely formed during the first thirty years of the twentieth century. Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway has written about interactions between Greece and Rome during the late Republic and the cultural background that led to the demand for luxury arts in marble. Mary Hollinshead explores the question of "originals" and "copies" and Roman views on repetition and multiplicity. Next is an essay on how Roman patrons themselves influenced Roman sculpture; followed by conservator Kent Severson's discussion of the treatment of ancient statuary. Lastly, Mary Hollinshead considers attitudes toward fragmentary sculpture since the Renaissance and the ways in which these perceptions have influenced the understanding of individual works. There follow six entries on selected objects from the exhibition.

We invite you to review the guide and enjoy this opportunity to examine the Museum's Roman sculpture collection, newly cleaned, mounted, and reconsidered for the first time in years.

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The RISD Museum
Project Director, *Rethinking the Romans*

CRISPIN CORRADO GOULET
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THE FORMATION OF RISD'S ROMAN SCULPTURE COLLECTION

The Museum of Art at Rhode Island School of Design is home to an exceptional collection of Roman marble sculpture, consisting primarily of portraits, male figures, and funerary objects. These holdings are familiar to scholars worldwide mainly through publication in 1972 of the *Catalogue of the Classical Collection: Sculpture*, authored by Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway. Recent significant exhibitions on Roman art, such as Yale University's *I, Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome* (1996) and the Worcester Art Museum's *Antioch: The Lost Ancient City* (2000), recognized the strength of the collection by including a number of RISD pieces. Many of the individual objects, however, have been hidden away in storage for years. It is hoped that this exhibition will allow our local audience to become familiar with the collection once again.

The RISD Museum's collection of Roman sculpture is largely the result of the vision and dedication of Mrs. Gustav Radeke and L. Earle Rowe. Mrs. Radeke (née Eliza Greene Metcalf) was the daughter of Helen Adelia Rowe Metcalf, one of RISD's founders (in 1877), and her husband, Jesse Metcalf, who donated funds to construct the Waterman Building to house the growing School and Museum (1893). Following in their parents'

footsteps, Mrs. Radeke and her brothers Jesse, Stephen, and Manton Metcalf offered endowment funds, gave land and buildings, and donated the money to erect new structures for RISD. Mrs. Radeke served as RISD's acting director (1907–08), then as president of the Board of Trustees of the Corporation (1913–31). Keenly aware of the major role played by the Museum collection in the education of students at the School, Mrs. Radeke sought to fill gaps in the holdings by making gifts of funds for acquisitions. She herself also bought works of art, including Greek, Roman, and Islamic objects, American furniture, and American and French drawings and paintings, which she then gave to the Museum. Although she was committed to enlarging the collection as a whole, she took a special interest in developing the classical collection.

L. Earle Rowe served as the third director of the Museum from 1912 until his sudden death in 1937. Rowe believed that three major purposes characterized museum activity: acquisition, preservation, and education.¹ He pursued an active acquisition policy while at RISD, building the core of the Museum's collection during his long tenure. His approach was to maintain two "lists": one of objects to be purchased when "good examples were offered" under favorable terms and another of rare objects, "supreme of their kind, to be taken at the first opportunity."² Rowe's goal was to gather an encyclopedic collection of top-quality art-historical objects at RISD. During the 1920s and 1930s, he acquired fifteen thousand objects representing many cultures and eras.³

An archaeologist by training, Rowe shared Mrs. Radeke's passion for classical antiquities. Together they purposefully set about acquiring Greek and Roman vases, bronzes, and marble sculptures. They chose artworks with the intention of gathering a representation of the variety of objects produced by the ancient Greeks and Romans. In this task they were aided by Edward Perry Warren, an American art collector and dealer living in England. Even before Rowe came to RISD, Mrs. Radeke had already enlisted Warren's aid. The letters exchanged by Mrs. Radeke and Warren, many of which are housed in the RISD Archive, shed light on Mrs. Radeke's intentions regarding the Museum's classical holdings.

1 Carla Mathes Woodward, "Acquisition, Preservation, and Education: A History of the Museum," in Franklin W. Robinson and Carla Mathes Woodward, eds., *A Handbook of the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design*. Providence: 1985, p. 33.

2 Elsie S. Bronson, "The Rhode Island School of Design: A Half-Century Record (1878–1928)," 1928, n.p. (typescript prepared for the 50th anniversary of RISD; collection RISD Library); see also Woodward, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 33.

Mrs. Gustav Radeke, President of the Board of Trustees, RISD, 1913–31. Portrait in crayon by Stacy Tolman, American, 1860–1935. Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke, acc. no. 20.538. Photograph by Del Bogart.



In 1900, Mrs. Radeke entrusted Warren with the dual responsibility of locating objects for the Museum that would draw forth the financial contributions of others towards their purchase and of finding pieces that Mrs. Radeke herself could buy for donation to the Museum. Warren met immediate success with the latter charge. Many of the earliest acquisitions of Roman sculpture to enter RISD's collection came as gifts from Mrs. Radeke. Between 1901 and 1905, she donated a head of an Amazon (acc. no. 01.005), a male figure in the guise of Hermes (acc. no. 03.008), a head of a youth in the guise of a deity (acc. no. 03.009), and a head of a woman (acc. no. 05.021). Over the next ten years she continued to be the Museum's primary donor of classical sculpture, giving a statuette of a young girl (acc. no. 13.1478) in 1913 and a lion-head waterspout (acc. no. 14.039) the following year.

Mrs. Radeke donated objects that she believed would be popular with the Museum's growing audience. She also chose artworks for the Museum that appealed to her aesthetically and that she perceived as being useful to students at the School. In a letter to Warren of December 18, 1915, Mrs. Radeke wrote:

The fragments of the Niobe work appealed very greatly to me. Some of the single fragments are very beautiful. The Committee who looked at them with me ... suggested that I should ask you whether you thought it was possible by spending an equal amount to secure other pieces of Greek sculpture that would bring home more adequately to our students the beauty of the work. Personally I am willing to spend up to — for the sculpture if in your opinion it is the best in the line of sculpture that we are likely to be able to acquire.⁴

The Niobe fragments about which Mrs. Radeke wrote in 1915 eventually entered the Museum collection in 1921: they form part of the front and lid of a sarcophagus (acc. no. 21.076). Superbly carved with two registers of dramatic scenes, the piece has justified Mrs. Radeke's choice. Students may still be seen sketching and studying the work today.

Mrs. Radeke seems to have directed Warren to find the best objects available. In a letter to Mrs. Radeke of May 10, 1918, Warren wrote: "So far I have been guided by your remark about the 'best things' and by the fact that chances [works of art], when they occur in war, are cheaper."⁵ With the onset of World War I, the art market became flooded with works being sold by European collectors in need of ready cash. This coincided with Lyra Brown Nickerson's three-million-dollar



L. Earle Rowe, Director of the Museum of Art, RISD, 1912–37. Photograph by Winslow, 1926 (negative courtesy of the RISD Archive).

bequest⁶ in 1916, which increased the Museum's annual acquisitions budget from \$25,000 to \$40,000. Taking full advantage of these circumstances, Rowe bought many works of art for the Museum during and after the war.⁷

In 1921, the Museum purchased two large examples of funerary art: a lidded Asiatic sarcophagus carved with scenes from the Trojan War on one side (acc. no. 21.074) and the aforementioned front and lid of a sarcophagus depicting the slaughter of Niobe's children (acc. no. 21.076).⁸ The Museum also acquired five nude male figures in various scales and poses: the figure of Dionysos or Apollo (acc. no. 20.039), the Bebenburg Youth (acc. no. 23.342), the torso of a fighting giant (acc. no. 25.064), a youthful figure wearing a torque (acc. no. 26.158), and a large male figure (acc. no. 26.159). To augment Mrs. Radeke's donation of a portrait of a Julio-Claudian man (acc. no. 22.211), the Museum added to its holdings a portrait of a man in the Republican style (acc. no. 25.063) and a portrait of the emperor Augustus (acc. no. 26.160). The Museum systematically acquired various types of relief sculpture as well: a bench support (acc. no. 23.352), a column with vine motif (acc. no. 26.156), fragments from a funerary altar (acc. no. 26.157), and a relief of a priest burning incense (acc. no. 26.161). Edward Perry Warren and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Sharpe also made gifts of objects.

4 Warren correspondence files, RISD Archive.

5 *Ibid.*

6 This became the Museum Acquisition Fund, which has been added to by anonymous donors over the years.

7 Bronson, *op. cit.*, n.p.; see also Woodward, *op. cit.*, p. 24.

8 Mrs. Radeke was instrumental in acquiring this piece for the Museum. She was already arranging with E. P. Warren to bring it to RISD as early as 1915. See letter from Mrs. Radeke to E. P. Warren, December 18, 1915, in the Warren correspondence files, RISD Archive.

Aproximately half of the Roman sculptures entered the Museum collection in the 1920s, but the end of the decade saw a slowing in the growth of this area. In 1928, Warren ceased to be an art dealer. The Depression years were beginning. Mrs. Radeke died in 1931. Rowe continued as director of RISD, but with the nucleus of the classical collection already formed, he turned his attention to other areas. The few objects that subsequently entered the Roman sculpture collection were intended to amplify its strengths. In the 1950s, Mrs. Murray S. Danforth, Mrs. Radeke's niece and successor as President of the Board of Trustees, donated two important Roman portraits to complement the three acquired in the 1920s: a portrait of the emperor Nero's mother, Agrippina the Younger (acc. no. 56.097), and a portrait of the emperor Hadrian (acc. no. 59.050). In 1971, a Palmyrene portrait of a man (acc. no. 71.167) was added to the Museum holdings. Provincial in origin, this likeness of a Roman citizen provides a sharp contrast to the heads of emperors and persons within the imperial circle in RISD's collection. In 1988, the Museum purchased an inscribed marble slab bearing the text of a directive from the emperor Hadrian to the citizens of Macedonia concerning Roman provincial administration (acc. no. 1988.060). Its date corresponds to a day sometime between December 10, 136, and December 10, 137, of the modern era.

Given the strength of the Roman sculpture collection, curatorial attention is now focused on the conservation and further study of particular objects. Preparing for this exhibition has provided the impetus and opportunity to reassess them in light of recent scholarship. Careful scrutiny of the sculptures as works of art in themselves and as functional components in the public, domestic, and funerary spheres of Roman life brings a fuller understanding of their significance and a renewed gratitude to the perspicacious individuals who built the collection over the years.

GEORGINA E. BORROMEO
Associate Curator of Ancient Art
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A PASSION FOR MARBLE

GRECO-ROMAN RELATIONSHIPS IN LATE
HELLENISTIC AND EARLY IMPERIAL TIMES

Exh. no. 6 BENCH SUPPORT, side view (23.352)

A marble slab (acc. no. 23.352) in The RISD Museum's collection of Greek and Roman antiquities may seem rather insignificant by comparison with other impressive holdings in the galleries, yet to the Romans of the Augustan period (27 BC–AD 14), it was an item of luxury, an expression of status, a symbol with some religious import, and a link to earlier times and foreign places.

The slab is decorated on each long face with an identical motif of facing S-shaped volutes framing a vertical stab with lotus buds. One of the short sides carries additional embellishment: a fierce-looking head, perhaps a mask, with forehead horns; animal ears; rolling eyes; prominent cheekbones; lips parted as if in utterance; a long, decorative mustache; and a very long beard terminating in a floral swag [ill. p. 8]. In profile, this side is seen to curve inward from the top, whereas the opposite short side is straight and plain. The spiral motif on the long faces is shifted toward the decorated end, and one pattern is in lower relief than the other. The object is clearly a support of some kind, probably for a bench, of which it formed the proper right leg.¹

One may find nothing extraordinary in a stone bench – Italian parks seem full of them. Yet for the Romans of the Late Republican period, any object in marble was an expensive item, often relying on imported material from the Greek mainland, the Greek islands, Asia Minor and Anatolia, even North Africa.² By approximately 50 BC, marble quarries had been discovered in Italy itself at Luna (modern Carrara), but their exploitation did not replace the desire for foreign imports. Perhaps the Greek masters working on Italian soil preferred the medium with which they were most familiar, or the quality of the various Greek stones was considered superior, which implies a good deal of connoisseurship on the part of the Roman customers, who seem to have been able to differentiate among these and to have preferred some for statuary, others for utilitarian objects.³

Not all marble was imported as raw material to be fashioned at destination. The recovery of the cargo of several Mediterranean shipwrecks has dramatically confirmed how much the so-called decorative arts of the Romans depended on direct imports of

1 In my original publication of the piece (*Catalogue of the Classical Collection, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design: Sculpture*. Providence: 1972, cat. no. 46, p. 113, ill. pp. 227–28), I had suggested that it belonged to either a throne or a table. Robert Cohon, who has written definitively on the subject of decorated table supports (1984), kindly tells me (letter of June 13, 2000) that he believes the slab to be too small for a table and more likely to have once supported a bench. On p. 13 of his work referred to above (R. H. Cohon, "Greek and Roman Stone Table Supports with Decorative Reliefs," PhD Dissertation, New York University, UMI, 1984), he lists the height of bench supports as ranging between 11 3/4 in. (29.5 cm.) and 18 in. (45.8 cm.), reaching a maximum of 18 3/4 in. (47.5 cm.). Any support higher than the maximum should belong to a table, any lower than 14 3/4 in. (37.5 cm.) to a bench. The RISD piece is 14 3/4 in. (37.4 cm.) high. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Cohon for his advice.

2 See, for instance, mentions of the Punic (Carthaginian) columns of the Apollo Palatinus complex, Rome (Propertius 2.31.3; cf. Ovid, *Tristia*, 3.1.61–62; "foreign" columns). On the various colored marbles used by the Romans, see M. L. Anderson, ed., *Radiance in Stone. Sculptures in Colored Marble from the Museo Nazionale Romano*. Atlanta and Rome: 1989; these stones, however, would have been enormously expensive for most private individuals.



Exh. no. 6 BENCH SUPPORT, frontal view (23.352)

finished products from Greece. In particular, the recent conservation, restudy, and exhibition of the finds from the Mahdia Wreck (a ship lost off the coast of Mahdia, Tunisia, ca. 70–60 BC) have conclusively and startlingly shown that several types of luxury objects that had seemed typically Roman were instead first produced in Greece, to be eventually copied and developed on Italian soil.⁴

The ship that foundered near Mahdia was probably pushed off course by a storm while on its way to one of the Italian ports. That it came from a Greek source was shown by its cargo: an enormous load of architectural elements in Pentelic marble, therefore from Athens. There were over sixty column shafts of various sizes, as well as numerous Ionic and Doric capitals and a few others imaginatively carved with spiky leaves, volutes, and busts of mythical horned lion-griffins (Chimaera capitals). Among the nonarchitectural objects were tall marble vases (about the height of a Mediterranean man) with figured scenes carved on their exterior surfaces. Equally impressive were elaborate marble candelabra consisting of several parts to be joined together. The assembled objects would have been even taller than the aforesaid vases. In addition, marble roundels carried busts of mythological creatures: satyrs and their female counterparts, perhaps maenads also. These were probably meant to be hung on walls as room or portico decoration. Statuary in the round included small flying Eros figures bearing torches. Their hollow bronze bodies were receptacles for oil; suspended in the air, they could be lit. A whole series of bronze ornaments for couches had engraved letters to assist in the assembling of the parts.

In brief, the Mahdia cargo contained the earliest examples of what had previously been known mainly from the private Campanian villas of Herculaneum, Pompeii, and other Roman cities destroyed by the Vesuvian eruption in AD 79. Another shipwreck, which foundered around 60 BC in Greek waters near Antikythera, has yielded greater-than-lifesize marble statues of Homeric figures – Odysseus, Achilles, and probably other heroes – as well as replicas and adaptations of some famous sculptures from the Classical and Hellenistic periods, including Herakles, Aphrodite, and Hermes. They, too, would have served to embellish gardens and grottoes, as shown by the finds from the cave at Sperlonga, an ancient site between Rome and Naples.



Exh. no. 2 FRAGMENT FROM A VASE (26.270)

Stone objects recovered from the sea after any length of time are likely to be heavily damaged by corrosive salt and marine animals; but these pieces may be visualized in their pristine condition because so many later examples of their types have been found on Italian soil or are depicted in Roman wall paintings. From these sources, it is known that the tall candelabra usually stood indoors, often paired on either side of a doorway, whereas the marble vessels adorned open-air spaces. Some of them were probably turned into fountains, the water spilling from their outcurved rims to form shimmering curtains that enlivened the relief figures behind.

The Romans loved such objects with a passion. Some sources have even talked of a Late Republican “marble boom” that did not abate until well into the second century of our era. Not all of these items were purely decorative, however. The marble vases – whose shape derived from terracotta containers used in banquets for the mixing of wine and water – were often appropriately adorned with nymphs and satyrs, creatures who accompanied Dionysos/Bacchus, the God of Wine, and were commonly associated with untamed nature. This decorative program suggested that the gardens in which the objects stood were potentially

3 It is now officially acknowledged by scholars that judging the provenience of any given stone purely by visual observation (as was formerly done) is thoroughly inadequate and that only isotopic analysis and other scientific methods can determine the source. ASMOSIA, the society for the study of marble and other stones in antiquity, is making great progress in this direction.

4 See G. Hellenkemper Salies et al., *Das Wrack. Der antike Schiffsfund vom Mahdia* (Kataloge des Rheinischen Landesmuseum, vol. I.1–2). Bonn: 1994, two vols.; and “Neue Forschungen zum Schiffsfund von Mahdia,” *Bonner Jahrbücher*, no. 196 (1996), pp. 199–337, esp. “Das Wrack. Eine Bilanz nach zwei Jahren,” pp. 199–219. For a summary account, cf. B. S. Ridgway, “The wreck off Mahdia, Tunisia, and the art-market in early 1st century B.C.,” *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, vol. 8 (1995), pp. 340–47.

5 See Ridgway, *op. cit.*, 1972, pp. 78–79, cat. no. 29. For the Salpion Krater (Naples, National Museum, no. 6673), see D. Grassinger, *Römische Marmorkratere*. Mainz: 1991, pp. 175–77, no. 19, figs. 22–25; cf. Grassinger's p. 186, no. 27, for the RISD fragment, dated to the Claudian period (AD 41–54).

6 For two such objects in The RISD Museum collection, see acc. nos. 26.156 and 50.263; Ridgway, *op. cit.*, 1972, pp. 114–15, cat. nos. 47, 48. Dr. Cohon has suggested to me (see n. 1) that cat. no. 48 is a table leg. For an idea of how much marble decoration might appear in a villa context, consider the peristyle of the Casa degli Amorini Dorati (House of the Golden Erotes) in Pompeii: F. Seiler, *Casa degli Amorini Dorati VI* 16,7.38 (Häuser in Pompeji, vol. 5). Munich: 1992.

7 In Roman art, some satyrs have horns, perhaps in a conflation with the goat-god Pan; see, e.g., several bronzes from Pompeii, including the famous *Dancing Satyr* that gives the name to the House of the Faun (Naples, National Museum, 5002): *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (hereafter, *LIMC*), vol. 8, s.v. *silenoī*, 1131, no. 233, pl. 783, and cf. no. 232 for a horned example from Pergamon.

8 In Greek art, rivers were often represented with bovine traits, since the sound of their rushing waters when in flood was compared to the bellowing of a bull. For Acheloos, see *LIMC*, vol. 1, s.v. *Acheloos*, esp. no. 162, pl. 34, for a bronze appliqué of Augustan date somewhat comparable to the head on the RISD bench leg.

9 The author's forthcoming book deals with much of this "Neo-Attic" material, especially chapters 8 and 9: B. S. Ridgway, *Hellenistic Sculpture III: The Styles of ca. 100–31 B.C.* Madison: 2002.

inhabited by such divine beings. The repertoire of images was traditional, probably based on books of patterns – illustrations, as it were, of stock subjects that could be ordered from workshops by patrons – taken from Classical and Hellenistic votive reliefs. Various figural types could be combined in different arrangements to narrate different stories. The workshops that produced such objects extrapolated and added at will with an eclecticism that should be seen as liberating and innovative, rather than as a sign of limited creativity and imagination. Although we call them "Neo-Attic," these carvings were made by masters of different ethnicities, and they continued to be produced for at least two or three centuries.

The RISD Museum owns a fragment (acc. no. 26.270, ill. p. 9) from one such vase, as its out-curving surface demonstrates. It bears the figure of a young satyr moving to the right as he holds a *thyrsos*, the magical Bacchic wand. His nonhuman nature is made obvious by the panther skin tied around his neck and draped over his outstretched left arm, yet the carver has omitted other animal features, such as pointed ears and a tail. He knew the type was recognizable not only because of its attributes and context, but also because of its familiarity to the viewers. In fact, the image recurs in a scene on a krater signed by the master Salpion, now in Naples.⁵

Bacchic imagery was not confined to vases. It appeared in a variety of objects within the peristyles (colonnaded courts) of Roman villas. Typical were the *oscilla* – marble disks hung between the columns of porticoes so that they would "oscillate" in the breeze – whose motifs emphasized the Dionysiac realm. Masks of Dionysos or of his special devotees the actors, either in the round or in

relief, hung on the walls. Tables stood on the sculpted legs of griffins or panthers, animals associated with the God of Wine. Vegetal patterns of twisting vines appeared on pedestals and other supports, an allusion to the freely regenerative powers of nature, even if nothing wild and unrestrained could be seen in the well ordered flowerbeds and carefully arrayed bushes and trees of these villa gardens.⁶

With this picture in mind, we may now return to the bench leg with which we started. Because it was of marble, it indicated that its owner was a person of taste and relative wealth, thus conferring upon him a certain social status in the eyes of the visitors (*clientes*) who were a standard feature of Roman life. Its decoration, moreover, carried definite religious allusions: the bearded head with horns and bovine ears depicts either an elderly satyr, thus a follower of Dionysos,⁷ or the river god Acheloos, who had strong roots in Italy, where it was considered a deity with underworld associations.⁸ Moreover, the head itself is rendered in an artificial manner that recalls the stylizations of the Archaic period (ca. 650–480 BC), particularly the arrangement of the overly long beard with spiral curls at its edges and the decorative mustache that flows into it. The long string of inverted flowers that hangs from the beard is another ornamental detail that adds to the impression of artificiality. This echo of an earlier style is quite deliberate. The pattern of volutes and buds carved on each long side recalls gravestone finials of the sixth century BC. This motif also partakes of that Archaistic trend so typical of the Augustan period: the deliberate imitation of Archaic Greek formulas that was meant to impart a sense of antiquity and long-standing veneration to the newly created objects they informed.⁹

The Romans of the Late Republican/Early Imperial period were quite different from the Greeks they had defeated, but the conquerors absorbed from the conquered a taste for art and luxury that entirely changed their lifestyle and their environment for centuries to come.

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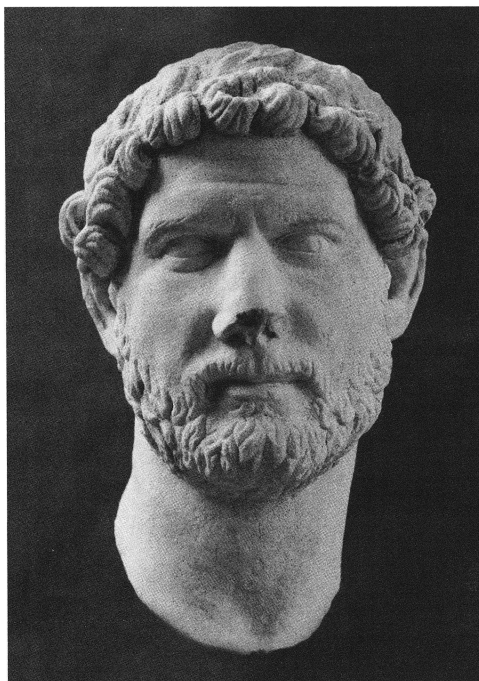
REASSESSING ROMAN REPLICATION

Sculpture carved in Roman times for Roman customers often depicts subjects from the Greek artistic tradition presented in poses and styles familiar from earlier works. Since J. J. Winckelmann's pioneering eighteenth-century treatises on the history of art,¹ the Romans' appreciation of Greek art to the point of emulation has led scholars to label Roman sculptures as copies: derivative work, devoid of originality or creativity. The current age of relaxed eclecticism seems a fitting time to reassess negative attitudes about such Roman works and to consider what nineteenth- and twentieth-century values have been applied retroactively to antiquity.

The Greek sculptural tradition has been associated with an idealized style in portrayals of subjects from Greek religion, myth, or legend, as expressed through identifiable poses, garments, hairstyles, and attributes. The generic, nonspecific nature of ideal style is characterized by symmetrical, well-proportioned facial features without emotional expression and by smoothly modeled flesh with few irregularities. Perfect specimens are represented, not individuals.

The ideal treatment of RISD's head of an Amazon (acc. no. 01.005, ill. p. 27), a legendary female warrior, links it to the Greek tradition, as does its hair, evocative of fifth-century BC style. The distinctive tilt of the head suggests a comparison to a complete statue of an Amazon in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.² This is a case of close replication, indeed a copy of a well known type. There exist more than twenty versions of this particular variety of Amazon, and four other types of Amazon are represented in Roman marble sculpture.³

Traditionally, scholars have studied statues of Amazons in light of a passage written by the Roman author Pliny the Elder (AD 23–79) describing a competition in which the contributors, five famous Greek sculptors, themselves judged whose was the best statue of an Amazon.⁴ RISD's head has been associated with the famous fifth-century BC sculptor Polykleitos. Much scholarly attention has been given over the years to attributing to each artist named by Pliny one type of the extant Amazons. This approach focuses on identifying a lost "original" assigned to a great master's name by picking



PORTRAIT OF HADRIAN ca. AD 120–130, marble; h. 16 1/8 in. (40.9 cm.), w. 9 13/16 in. (24.9 cm.), d. 7 3/4 in. (19.7 cm.). Gift of Mrs. Murray S. Danforth, acc. no. 59.050. Photograph by Robert Thornton.

out common traits among the multiple replicas of each type and dismissing variations as deviations from the prototype. Based on the questionable assumption that Pliny's text is strictly factual, such scholarship focuses on Roman recreations of Greek subjects as clues to a privileged past – vestiges of a named master – instead of attempting to understand them as products of a Roman society that recognized its cultural inheritance by selecting Greek subjects and themes. Ironically, Pliny, who acknowledges his reliance on earlier Greek sources, is treated as an entirely accurate and legitimate author, while Roman sculptors who emulate Greek sources are viewed as copyists and their products as pale images of a finer past, not as works of Roman art.⁵ A writer may incorporate information from others' work, but a sculptor may not?

New approaches to Roman culture must be developed in order to understand RISD's head of an Amazon as a work of art, even though there are others in existence much like it. Over the last two centuries, Western culture has placed high value on the "originality" of artwork, its difference and distinction from that which had preceded it. A corollary value is singularity, the unique and special properties of one work. Such modern attitudes

1 Recent works on Winckelmann include A. Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal*. London: 1994; and A. A. Donohue, "Winckelmann's History of Art and Polykleitos," in W. G. Moon, ed., *Polykleitos, the Doryphoros and Tradition*. Madison: 1995, pp. 327–53.

2 G.M.A. Richter, *Catalogue of the Greek Sculptures, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York*. Cambridge (MA): 1954, no. 37, pp. 29–30, pls. 34–36.

3 R. Bol, *Amazonen Volneratae. Untersuchungen zu den Ephesischen Amazonenstatuen*. Mainz: 1998, pp. 35–49, 171, 184, pls. 28–29; and B. S. Ridgway, "A Story of Five Amazons," *American Journal of Archaeology*, vol. 78 (1974), pp. 1–17.

4 Pliny, *Natural History*, 33:53: "After thus defining the periods of the most famous artists, I will hastily run through those of outstanding distinction....The most celebrated have also come into competition with each other, although born at different periods, because they had made statues of Amazons; when these were dedicated in the temple of Artemis at Ephesus, it was agreed that the best one should be selected by the vote of the artists themselves who were present; and it then became evident that the best was the one which all the artists judged to be the next best after their own: this is the Amazon by Polykleitos, while next to it came that of Pheidias, third Cresilas's, fourth Cydon's, and fifth Phradmon's" (trans. by H. Rackham, *Pliny. Natural History, Books XXXII–XXXV*. Cambridge [MA]: 1952, reprinted 1995).



foster a devaluation of Roman sculptures such as the Amazon's head, which appears to be one of a series of very similar replicas based on an earlier Greek prototype. In the context of its creation in the first century of the modern era – a complex world dominated by Rome without benefit of modern electronic media – visual art was a primary agent of communication. Images had to demonstrate enough consistency of form to be recognizable. One has no trouble accepting the need for recognizability and consistency of form in portraiture, as seen in RISD's head of Augustus (acc. no. 26.160, ill. p. 25) or that of Hadrian (acc. no. 59.050, ill. p. 11). Repeating salient features of the physiognomy and hairstyle allows identification of these rulers. Each occurrence of the emperor's image reasserts his authority.⁶ Likewise, each appearance of the Amazon (identifiable by ideal style, hairstyle, and pose) reflects a patron's intent, a conscious choice based on layers of meaning. Repetition demonstrates and strengthens the continuing power of the Amazon's image in Roman settings.

The Amazon is a recognizable figure, but what about statuary of a type derived from Greece whose identity is unclear? Variations on the theme of the nude athletic male, such as RISD's torso (acc. no. 26.159, ill. p. 29), occur frequently in the Roman world. One has only to note the additional examples of unclothed males in this exhibition (acc. nos. 03.008, 25.064; ill. p. 22 and left). Lacking its head, arms, and legs, except for the proper right thigh, this work (acc. no. 26.159) can still be associated with the Greek sculptural tradition because it is naked, male, and youthful, a combination of traits seen consistently throughout Greek art. The taut, clearly articulated musculature, together with the weight shift of the stance, suggests the classical Greek sculptural style of the fifth century BC, an approach usually described as comparable to works associated with Polykleitos.

Is it necessary to interpret this statue as a copy of a now-unknown Greek prototype? By analogy, does every gothic-revival church in America replicate a specific prototype in England? Emulation involves appropriating themes and styles so as to make a new creation. There is meaning to be

found in what is appropriated and how elements from the past are reinterpreted. The figure preserved as RISD's torso (acc. no. 26.159) is a fine example of a Roman product for a Roman patron. The statue was made in a style evocative of the past, presumably selected for its suitability to the subject. Roman patrons chose statuary to decorate their houses and villas according to many criteria, ranging from aesthetics of form to appropriateness of subject matter. To fully understand this torso, one would have to know more about its placement and context.⁷ Perhaps the educated Roman viewer made a conceptual link to Greece of the fifth century BC; however, by the first century of our era (the probable date of the torso), this kind of composition may have been so widespread as to signify simply a divine or heroic personage. To the general viewer, the statue would indicate a mythological male, not a specific borrowing from a previous culture. Most Americans learn "My Country 'Tis of Thee" as their own patriotic hymn. Only students of history recognize the cultural lineage of its tune: the British anthem "God Save the Queen" with a new text produced for its new use.

One goal of this exhibit is to draw attention to classicizing sculpture as thoroughly Roman works of art: as intentional creations that embody the values and attitudes of Roman artists and patrons, rather than as illustrations of ancient texts, clues to absent masterpieces, or mechanical copies. In order to understand the Amazon's head and the torso of a young man as Roman sculpture, one must shed long-held views about antiquity. Ancient texts yield helpful, but not primary, information about art, and they must always be evaluated for both accuracy and bias. A concept or composition that is first seen in Greek art and then later appears in Roman art need not reflect paucity of imagination on the Romans' part. Each creation of a Roman statue occurred for a patron in a context that governed the meanings to be associated with that statue. Originality and singularity carried less importance than they do now. Consistency of representation, including repetition, was valued as a mode of communication. By discarding outdated attitudes about the purpose and value of Roman sculpture, it becomes possible to understand better and to enjoy the objects themselves and the culture that produced them.

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5 J. J. Pollitt, *The Art of Ancient Greece, Sources and Documents*. Cambridge (England): 1990, 2nd ed., pp. 2–3.

6 E. K. Gazda, "Roman Sculpture and the Ethos of Emulation: Reconsidering Repetition," in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, vol. 97 (1995), pp. 121–56, esp. pp. 139–44 on the linkage between portraiture and repetition.

7 E. Bartman, "Sculptural Collecting and Display in the Private Realm," in E. K. Gazda, ed., *Roman Art in the Private Sphere*. Ann Arbor: 1991, pp. 71–88; also E. Bartman, "Décor et Duplication: Pendants in Roman Sculptural Display," *American Journal of Archaeology*, vol. 92 (1988), pp. 211–25; and M. Marvin, "Copying in Roman Sculpture: The Replica Series," in K. Preciado, ed., *Retaining the Original: Multiple Originals, Copies and Reproductions* (Studies in the History of Art, vol. 20). Washington, DC: 1989, pp. 29–45.

MESSAGES IN MARBLE

PATRONAGE AND ROMAN SCULPTURE

The variety and sheer number of Roman sculptures that survive today attest to the important role that sculpture played in the daily lives of the Romans. The prevalence of portraits and ideal works (those based on mythological figures and other idealized types) in the surviving material hints at similar uses for sculpture or common goals shared by patrons. By looking carefully at the portraits, heads from myth and legend, male torsos, and draped female figures in The RISD Museum collection, it is possible to reconstruct the tastes and intentions of the Roman patron.

The RISD Museum's portrait of Augustus (acc. no. 26.160, ill. p. 25) is one of over two hundred surviving sculptural portraits of Rome's first emperor (reigned 27 BC–AD 14). More portraits of Augustus exist than for any other Roman emperor. Augustus commissioned them to commemorate key events in his reign. He had approved portraits sent out from Rome to sculptural centers all over the empire, where they were copied. The copies were then distributed to outlying areas, much as the news media today disseminate current events to a global audience. Each copy of an official portrait followed an established prototype, so that the image would be immediately recognizable everywhere in the empire. Augustus created the mind-set for Roman use and response to sculpture throughout the imperial period.

The RISD head belongs to the most significant of early Augustan portrait types,¹ a group that attempted to balance his youthfulness with his imperial authority. The piece's unfinished top and back suggest that it was originally covered by part of the sculpted stone toga of the now-missing body, depicted as if some of the folds of the toga had been pulled up and drawn over the head.² With head covered, the portrayal of Augustus would have represented his role as priest within the Roman state religion (Augustus became *pontifex maximus* in 12 BC). Some of the other stock body types for sculptures of the emperor, depending on the message to be conveyed, were military commander, hero, divinity, and deified emperor. Augustus's disseminated portraits might promote him as victor in the battle of Actium and therefore sole ruler of Rome; as a semidivine leader to be obeyed and revered; as a deified ruler whose glory devolved on his descendants.

Portraits of Augustus dominated public squares and baths, law courts, theaters, temples, libraries, markets, and at times were even substitutes for his actual presence,³ giving authority to his representatives in remote areas seldom, if ever, visited by the emperor. Imperial portraits soon acquired symbolic power: citizens appealed directly to them for aid and attached petitions to them, or paid fines and sought asylum at their feet, particularly in the provinces.⁴ The importance of the imperial portrait to Roman citizens throughout the empire cannot be underestimated. It made the ruler recognizable and present to his subjects.

Almost all Augustan portraits depict him with idealized features and an expression of calm, dignity, and confidence. This classicizing style endured in imperial portraiture after his death. Official portraits of his immediate successors were made to resemble those of Augustus as a way of legitimizing their own claims to rule. Others of Augustus's family reinforced their exalted position in Roman society by evoking his appearance in their own likenesses. Portraits of the men in the Julio-Claudian family look so much alike that scholars have had difficulty in identifying them.

This is the case with another of RISD's Roman male portrait heads (acc. no. 22.211, right). His facial features, especially his eyebrows and mouth, are reminiscent of Augustus. Although his hairstyle is generally similar to that of Augustus, the particular arrangement of comma-shaped locks of hair across his forehead more closely resembles that of the youthful Germanicus (son of Drusus the Elder and nephew to Augustus's stepson Tiberius), while his profile, particularly the nose, recalls representations of Drusus the Younger (son of Augustus's stepson Tiberius).⁵ Although the RISD portrait represents one of the Julio-Claudians, his identity cannot be determined with absolute certainty.

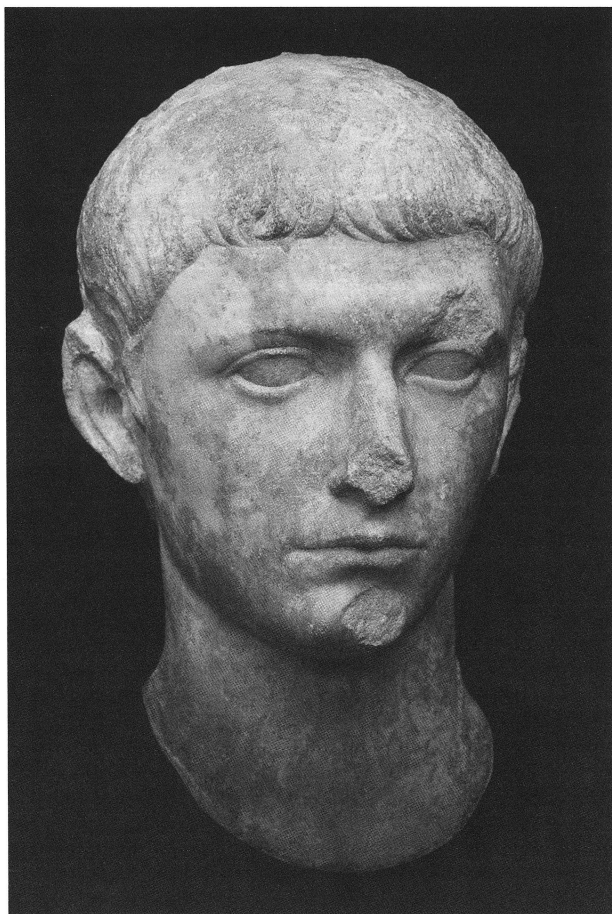
Models of the emperor's approved portrait types were made available to the "art market," enabling Romans to commission or purchase portraits of the emperor.⁶ Wealthy citizens displayed images of the emperor in their townhouses and villas to show their loyalty and also to underscore their status as members of the emperor's inner circle. The homes of wealthy Roman men were not private in the same sense that our homes are today. Every morn-

1 For the most recent study of Augustan portraiture, see D. Boschung, *Die Bildnisse des Augustus. Das Römische Herrscherbild*, part 1, vol. 2. Berlin: 1993. Boschung renamed this type, formerly known as the Octavian or Actium type, as the Alcudia type; see cat. no. 22, pl. 17, for the RISD Augustus. See also the review of Boschung by J. Pollini, *Art Bulletin*, vol. 81, no. 4 (December 1999), pp. 723–35.

2 B. S. Ridgway, *Catalogue of the Classical Collection, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design: Sculpture*. Providence: 1972, cat. no. 31, pp. 82–83.

3 K. Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves. Sociological Studies in Roman History*, vol. 1. New York: 1978, p. 221. J. P. Rollin, *Untersuchungen zu Rechtsfragen römischer Bildnisse*. Bonn: 1979, pp. 117–23, 148–49.

4 Hopkins, *op. cit.*, p. 224. On petitions to statues, see S. Walker, *Roman Art*. Cambridge (England): 1991, p. 30. On the payment of fines, see S.R.F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor*. New York: 1984, p. 193. On asylum, see T. Pekáry, "Ad statuas confugere," in *Das römische Kaiserbildnis in Staat, Kult und Gesellschaft: dargestellt anhand der Schriftquellen*. Berlin: 1985, pp. 130–31; Price, *op. cit.*, pp. 192–93; Hopkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 222–23.



Exh. no. 3 PORTRAIT OF A JULIO-CLAUDIAN (22.211)
Photograph by Robert Thornton.

ing a stream of clients came to perform the customary *salutatio*, the paying of their respects to their patrons. A Roman patrician's home was the center of both his family life and his work. Since the objects in his home were highly visible, they were chosen and arranged with particular attention to the messages they conveyed and their ability to achieve the desired effect.

The poet Ovid, exiled by Augustus to the Black Sea, set up portraits (presumably small bronzes) of Augustus, his wife the empress Livia, her son Tiberius, and other members of the imperial family in a shrine in his home. After Augustus's death, Ovid wrote in a letter:

Nor is my piety unknown: a strange land sees a shrine to Caesar [Augustus] in my house. Beside him stand the pious son [Tiberius] and the priestess wife [Livia], deities not less important than himself now that he is a god. To make the household group complete, both of the grandsons [Gaius and Lucius] are there, one by the side of his grandmother, the other by that of his father. To these I offer incense and words of prayer as often as the day rises from the east.⁷

By setting up images of the emperor's family in a shrine, worshipping them, and, most significantly, by advertising these actions, Ovid conveyed a message: the reaffirmation of his allegiance to Augustus's family. His much desired goal was an imperial pardon from exile and a return to Rome.⁸

Traditionally, scholars have acknowledged portraiture to be among the Romans' greatest contributions to art, but the hundreds of extant statues of mythological figures and other such idealized subjects have been overlooked until relatively recently.⁹ These ideal sculptures reflected earlier Greek works in subject matter and style, so much so that in the past, Roman art was considered highly derivative of the Greek. Greek prototypes, mainly representations of deities, were in their own time displayed primarily in religious contexts. The Romans, however, did not subscribe to this practice. They used idealized figures of gods, goddesses, personifications of nature, heroes, and athletes to decorate Rome's public squares, baths, sanctuaries, libraries, markets, and theaters. Exteriors and interiors of public buildings were embellished with statuary appropriate in subject to the structures' functions: for example, figures of athletes or heroes such as Herakles/Hercules adorned baths and gymnasias. The designers of such buildings repeatedly chose works with obvious associations.¹⁰ Certain figures became widely used, with Venus and Herakles enjoying the greatest popularity. Well known and well loved, Venus and Herakles were venerated both in domestic religion and state cult and found themselves at home in many other contexts.

5 On the similarity of the RISD portrait to portraits of Drusus the Younger, see Ridgway, *op. cit.*, cat. no. 31, pp. 82–83.

6 Pollini, *op. cit.*, p. 731.

7 Ovid, *Epistulae Ex Ponto* (to Graecinus), 4.9.105–112. See Ovid, *Tristia; Ex Ponto with an English translation* by Arthur Leslie Wheeler (rev. G. P. Goold). Cambridge (MA): 1988, 2nd ed.

8 See G. E. Borromeo, *Roman Small-Scale Portrait Busts*, PhD dissertation, Brown University, Providence, 1993, pp. 128–31, for a brief discussion of imperial portraits in domestic contexts as they relate to the imperial cult.

9 See B. S. Ridgway, *Roman Copies of Greek Sculpture: The Problem of the Originals*. Ann Arbor: 1984, for the earliest reassessment of Roman ideal sculpture; and E. K. Gazda, "Roman Sculpture and the Ethos of Emulation: Reconsidering Repetition," in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, vol. 97 (1995), pp. 121–56, for a summary of the issues and recent scholarship.

10 M. Marvin, "Copying in Roman Sculpture: The Replica Series," in K. Preciado, ed., *Retaining the Original: Multiple Originals, Copies, and Reproductions* (Studies in the History of Art, vol. 20). Washington, DC: 1989, p. 34.

The Romans also displayed ideal sculptures in private houses, villas, and gardens, where they were visible to the many and frequent visitors. Again, the message was perhaps more important than the owner's personal enjoyment of the artwork. Statues in the Greek style spoke to the fine taste, sophistication, and wealth of the owner and his family.¹¹ The draped figure of a woman in the RISD collection (acc. no. 23.351, ill. p. 35) is based on one such example of ideal sculpture: a figure of Venus.¹² Unlike the Greeks, who preferred not to mix the specific with the ideal in the same work, the Romans did not find it peculiar to attach portrait heads to idealized bodies associated with mythical figures. It is possible that the RISD draped female figure once had a portrait head attached to it.¹³ Augustus's wife, the empress Livia, was the first Roman woman to be represented in official art in the guise of Venus, setting the trend for later empresses to be represented as goddesses.¹⁴ By the second century of our era, when this figure was sculpted, it was not unusual for individualized portrait heads to be attached to generic idealized body types associated with gods and goddesses. These composite images were meant to imply that the actual persons depicted in such sculptures possessed the qualities of the deities with whose body types their likenesses were merged. The Romans became adept at recognizing specific ideal types and making associations based on them through their frequent exposure to sculpture. When looking at a figure based on representations of the goddess Venus, a Roman viewer thought immediately of beauty and fertility, and then perhaps of virtues associated with Venus as wife and mother, such as familial loyalty, piety, and moderation.

There is one extant example of written evidence that sheds light on a Roman patron's goals in acquiring sculpture: letters written by the Roman orator Marcus Tullius Cicero (106–44 BC) to his friends Atticus (in 68 and 65 BC) and Gallus (46 BC). Cicero's letters to Atticus, who lived in Athens and there purchased works of art for his friends, asked that he obtain sculptures for Cicero's villa in Tusculum. Cicero desired decorations (*ornamenta*) that would be appropriate for his gymnasium (*gymnasiode*), which by Cicero's time had become a place where young men went to study philosophy and where athletes trained. Cicero wanted to evoke the contemplative mood that he had experienced in the Academy in Athens, where he had studied philosophy as a young man. He did not request a particular work or subject, nor did he specify the artist, style, scale, or material: he described for Atticus the locations where the statues were to be placed. For the Roman patron, it was particularly important that sculptures be appropriate to the spaces they enlivened and helped define.¹⁵

Roman sculptural groupings that appear strictly decorative to our eyes were often carefully planned, specifically designed by the patron to convey a particular, often self-promoting, message. Always mindful of the appropriateness of the sculpture to its setting and context, the Roman patron mixed and matched elements – heads, bodies, arms – from sculptures of diverse subjects, types, styles, and dates in commissioning a statue. The artist then created an original work that was rich in meaning and reflective of the patron's tastes and goals.

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11 B. S. Ridgway, "Roman Bronze Statuary – Beyond Technology," in C. C. Mattusch, ed., *The Fire of Hephaistos: Large Classical Bronzes from North American Collections*. Cambridge (MA): 1996, p. 130.

12 The RISD figure is reminiscent of the Aphrodite Frejus (late 5th century BC) type, although the left breast is modestly covered. A replica of the Aphrodite Frejus type in Naples, also with left breast covered, has the idealized head of the prototype. See Ridgway, *op. cit.*, 1972, cat. no. 14, pp. 41–42, n. 8.

13 *Ibid.*, pp. 41–42.

14 S. B. Matheson, "The Divine Claudia: Women as Goddesses in Roman Art," in D.E.E. Kleiner and S. B. Matheson, eds. *I, Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome*. New Haven: 1996, pp. 140, 186, 189. Venus was particularly important to the Julio-Claudian family, who traced their roots back to her and adopted her as their patron deity. In AD 14, shortly after the death of Augustus, Livia was adopted into the Julian family through a stipulation in Augustus's will. She appears in the guise of Venus Genetrix in a cameo in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, acc. no. 99.109; see R. Winkes, "Der Kameo Marlborough. Ein Urbild der Livia," *Archäologischer Anzeiger* (1982), pp. 131–38.

15 For a full discussion and analysis of these letters, see Marvin, *op. cit.*, pp. 29–45.

WHY ANCIENT ROMAN SCULPTURES LOOK THE WAY THEY DO

The ancient Romans used marble for sculpture, architectural decoration, and fine luxury objects. Marble is a good material for sculpture and delicate ornament because it is not too difficult to carve, being softer than granite and other hard stones. Also, marble often occurs in large, homogeneous deposits of pure creamy white, the color most favored by ancient sculptors. The relative softness of marble gave ancient artists great freedom in carving and finishing, but it also meant that such sculptures could be easily broken and their finely finished surfaces easily marred. The story behind the appearance of ancient Roman sculpture begins with the working properties of marble and continues with how the sculptures were used and what happened to them when they went out of use.

In preparation for The RISD Museum's exhibition of its Roman collection, several pieces were prepared physically by the author. The conservator's job is to preserve artifacts of cultural significance (visit the web site of the American Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works at <http://aic.stanford.edu>). Modern conservation is based on the idea that if one learns everything possible about the materials from which an object is made, one also will learn what is causing it to deteriorate and be able to devise a treatment that will not alter the original material. Just as a doctor examines a patient before making a diagnosis, a conservator must take a good, close look at a piece before treating it to find out what it is made of and what is wrong with it. During this process and the treatment that may follow, a conservator often learns a great deal about how the sculpture was made and what has happened to it over the years.

Conservation treatments range from simply modifying the environment around an object to chemical cleaning and actual restoration. The word "restoration" normally refers to the replacement of missing parts of historic or artistic works. "Conservation" is a broader term that encompasses all preservation activities and sometimes includes restoration. Restoration may make a sculpture easier to understand or more attractive to viewers. Conservation methodology may enhance restoration by reducing stress on the object; by making restoration easy to undo, if necessary; and by making the restoration

more durable in the long term. The conservator will often undertake restorations, but only if they are beneficial to the overall goal of preserving the object for the future.

Most Roman statues were either mounted on or in buildings as part of decorative architectural schemes or set up on bases inside or outdoors. Statues might fall from their settings because of earthquakes, catastrophic fires, or acts of deliberate destruction. Of course, the parts that protrude always break off most easily, and those parts will snap at their narrowest points: wrists, elbows, ankles, knees, necks. The neck and arms of the torso of a fighting giant (acc. no. 25.064, ill. p. 12) were probably broken in this way, as was the left arm of the male figure (acc. no. 26.159, ill. p. 29). Many ancient Roman sculptures represented emperors, local rulers, and famous people with considerable political significance. When these persons fell from favor or were defeated by their enemies in war, their marble images were often deliberately damaged, symbolically killing and stripping the likenesses of their power.

When sculptures were broken in ancient times, they were not always discarded; in fact, they were often repaired. On the right shoulder of the male figure (acc. no. 26.159) is a hole for insertion of an iron dowel, presumably to reattach the broken arm in an ancient repair job. Iron dowels were usually held in place by pouring molten lead around them. Numerous sculptures in *Rethinking the Romans* were repaired in this way, and sometimes the end of the iron dowel or the lead is still visible, protruding from an area of more recent damage. A piece of lead may be seen on the left side of the male figure (acc. no. 26.159). When arms or legs were broken beyond fixing in Roman times, they were sometimes replaced with entirely new parts, creating what may honestly be called ancient restorations. To make such repairs, the artisan often evened off the joining surfaces in order to better fit the two pieces together. Both arms of the male figure in the guise of Hermes (acc. no. 03.008, ill. p. 22) were cut back for this kind of joining,¹ as was the right leg of the male

1 The brass dowels formerly holding the sculpture to its wooden base had been modified several times, making the mounting system unstable. During conservation, all old mounting hardware was removed, including the lead and plaster of Paris holding the dowels in place. Removal of plaster from the left leg revealed a previously unknown cutting, probably for an ancient repair. The sculpture was remounted on a specially designed base with new brass dowels. Years of accumulated dust and soot obscured the warm color of the marble surface. The sculpture was cleaned with a mild detergent solution and water.

figure (acc. no. 26.159). Some sculptures were originally carved in several pieces of marble and then joined together with dowels. The artisan evened off the joining surfaces of the separate pieces to ensure a good fit.

The technique of carving sculptures in several pieces of marble and joining them together was often used with portraits for the attachment of heads. By preparing the bodies in stock styles and poses (a

nude male in athletic posture or a draped woman making an offering) and then inserting finished portrait heads as requested by clients, the sculptor could quickly fill orders or change images when a new emperor took power. The bases of the neck on the female figure (acc. no. 23.351, ill. p. 35) and on the youthful figure wearing a torque (acc. no. 26.158, ill. p. 33) were hollowed out to



receive heads, now missing. Of course, if the head of a sculpture were broken accidentally or intentionally, it would also be easy to replace it using this technique. The hollowed-out space below the collarbones on the male figure (acc. no. 26.159) is unusually low and may be the result of such a repair, as is the evened-off and hollowed-out neck and right shoulder of the male figure in the guise of Hermes (acc. no. 03.008).

Some marble sculptures ended up as building materials: stone for walls, or fill beneath pavement. The male figure in the guise of Hermes is battered and rough from his right shoulder down to his right leg in back, but it does not look as though it were damaged in a fall. The numerous shallow pits suggest that this side of the stone was intentionally flattened a little, perhaps to make it fit as a piece in construction. Traces of mortar on this rough surface and on broken and carved surfaces of the torso of a fighting giant also suggest that these sculptures were reused in construction.

Missing limbs, heads, and other major losses are seldom replaced today, mainly because in most cases no one really knows enough about their original appearance. Although many compositions in Roman sculpture are well known through multiple copies, there are always subtle variations – and often surprises. To replace a missing element without being certain of how it should look could be misleading for both the viewing public and scholars. Another good reason to avoid making ambitious restorations is that no matter how hard a restorer tries to match the style and appearance of the original, restorations always carry some of the flavor of the time in which they are made. Even the most sophisticated restorations are likely to look out of date and awkward to the eyes of future viewers. This kind of difference in style is one way through which art historians detect forgeries.

During the Renaissance, sculptors often completely restored ancient sculptures, sometimes creating wholly new compositions from small fragments. The head of Agrippina the Younger (acc. no. 56.097, left) in this exhibition did not originally belong with the later bust on which it is now mounted. Sometimes a mold might be taken from a similar sculpture and a cast part used to fill in a missing element. When that is done, the restoration is made obvious to avoid confusion about what is original and what is not. Sometimes, instead of making actual restorations, curators show missing parts in drawings or digitally produced images exhibited with the sculptures, leaving the fragments to stand on their own in the galleries.



Exh. no. 14 HEAD OF A SATYR GRASPED BY THE HAIR (26.165)

Many surfaces of ancient marble sculptures were polished, especially areas that depicted human skin. The original polished surfaces remain in the head of a satyr grasped by the hair (acc. no. 26.165, above) and the head of an Amazon (acc. no. 01.005, ill. p. 27). Marble is made mostly of calcium carbonate, and almost all carbonates dissolve easily in acid. Exposure to even the mildest acidic solution may etch the surface of marble. Rainwater is naturally slightly acidic, so the surfaces of ancient outdoor sculptures may have been slightly marred even in their own times. Soil may be acidic also, and buried sculptures may lose their polish, especially when the soil is filled with decaying plant material or when the groundwater moves rapidly through the soil. Some parts of a marble block may be more sensitive to acid than others and so dissolve more quickly. The rough surface on the right side of the male figure (acc. no. 26.159) is the result of this kind of selective erosion.

2. Numerous previous campaigns of mounting the *Torso of a Fighting Giant* had resulted in four modern drill holes in the figure's legs and groin. The new remounting of this dynamic figure utilizes one of these holes in a simplified system on a newly designed base. Gentle cleaning removed darkening from airborne soil and hand contact, bringing out the warm color of the stone and subtle rendering of musculature in the sculpture.

Materials dissolved in groundwater that build up on buried surfaces are known as "accretions." This buildup is often the result of root growth around the stone, which leaves a distinctive pattern. Such marks can be seen on the portrait of a boy in the guise of a deity (acc. no. 03.009, ill. p. 30) and on the back of the torso of a fighting giant. Note that there are also accretions on the broken surface of the giant's proper right arm. When accretions are found on broken edges, they are an important clue to the history of the sculpture. Because there are accretions on the broken surface, we know that the arm broke off before the sculpture was buried, rather than after it was discovered. Metals dissolved in groundwater, such as copper and iron, may result in colored stains on the marble. Iron in the groundwater probably caused the irregular reddish pattern on the portrait of a Julio-Claudian (acc. no. 22.211, ill. p. 15). Iron dowels used in ancient joins or repairs may cause rust-colored stains.

The main goal of modern conservation is preservation, and today's conservator usually wants to preserve not only the surviving original material, but evidence of the sculpture's history as well. Every single mark, no matter how small, may tell something about a sculpture. Taking it away would be erasing a part of the piece's history. Of course, if burial accretions or dirt are so heavy that one can no longer see the object, they probably need to be at least partially removed. Before a sculpture is cleaned, the accretions are recorded in photographs and written descriptions, and frequently enough residue is left behind to give an indication that burial accretions were present. Recutting or repolishing, no matter how carefully done, also results in irreversible changes in the character of a sculpture. The style in which a sculpture is carved and the way the sculptor used his tools tell a great deal about when and why the artwork was made.

Most of the sculptures on view in *Rethinking the Romans* have been in the Museum's collection for many decades and so did not require cleaning to remove soil or accretion from burial. Sculptures in a museum, however, do constantly accumulate soot and dust, as does furniture in a home. Anyone

who touches a dirty sculpture with bare hands will grind these particles into pores in the stone, leaving a grimy, dark stain, while the acids found on human fingers may etch the marble. This is why museums ask viewers not to touch objects on display. For this exhibition, the sculptures were cleaned to remove these kinds of marks and other modern accretions.

Some of the objects in this exhibit, such as the portrait of Agrippina the Younger, were placed on bases by previous owners. These mounts are of historical interest in and of themselves, and such mounts are preserved along with the sculptures. Several of the older mounts and bases did not safely support their sculptures and have been replaced.² Some of the artworks, such as the male figure (acc. no. 26.159), had been mounted at the wrong angle. After much study, they have been repositioned on specially designed bases to give a better idea of the original poses. Other sculptures in this show had been attached to their bases with iron pins. Since iron expands when it rusts, iron inside a mounting hole in the marble may split the surrounding stone. For this reason, most of the dowels and attachments now used for mounting these sculptures are brass or stainless steel and are isolated from contact with the marble by special coatings.

The discovery of a previously unknown sculpture at an archeological site is an exciting new contribution to the knowledge of ancient Roman sculpture. When sculptures are found, every detail of their discovery and state of preservation is carefully considered and recorded. By the time Roman sculptures reach museum collections, they are usually well studied and possess long post-excavation histories. Preparations for a new exhibition such as *Rethinking the Romans* bring fresh eyes to the pieces, and every examination, even the most routine, reveals previously unnoticed details about the sculpture's history.

KENT SEVERSON
Conservator in Private Practice

THE FASCINATION OF FRAGMENTS

To most people, broken marble sculpture means ancient Greek and Roman art. Emblems of an heroic past, fragments confirm this assumption, suggesting that the long centuries since the objects' creation have taken their toll. Their incompleteness as well as their age is intriguing. The identity, date, and maker of a partially preserved object such as RISD's torso of a fighting giant (acc. no. 25.064, ill. p. 12) are far from certain. The excellent quality of carving combines with the pose, suggested by the musculature and what remains of three limbs, to convey dynamic but unresolved movement. Because of the giant's fragmentary condition, the viewer must imagine missing parts to complete or contain the composition. To create a meaning for this torso, whether a physical identity or an aesthetic understanding, one is forced to engage with it, to apply greater effort than is necessary with more complete works.

RISD's bodiless head of a satyr grasped by the hair (acc. no. 26.165, ill. p. 19) is more readily identified because its pointed ears and smiling, dimpled face are easily recognized features, but one must still apply imagination – or extensive scholarship – to explain why a female hand grasps his hair; why he grins as his head is wrenched backwards; and what the missing bodies may have been doing. The juxtapositions of such good cheer with potential harm and of a tousle-headed male with a soft female hand intrigue, even titillate. This satyr's head hints at a story only partially told.

Such fragments of ancient statues have evoked a variety of responses reflecting cultural and political circumstances and attitudes over time. Because large-scale sculpture is unwieldy and expensive, the history of fragmentary statuary is tied to that of great collections, of individuals and institutions possessing both money and personnel to arrange for acquisition, preservation, and display. The incompleteness of many ancient statues led to a vigorous practice of restoration in the past. Sculptors in sixteenth-century Rome refurbished antiquities as part of their training and their employment. By the mid-eighteenth century, Rome had become the international center for the addition of missing limbs, heads, and attributes to fragmentary ancient statues:

...such remnants, reproductions, and contrafactions of antiquities, their value often inflated by sharp commercial practices as much as by fancy and wishful thinking, fed the virtually insatiable appetites not only of professionally interested artisans and local collectors but also of wealthy and powerful foreigners schooled and driven by social and cultural ambitions.¹

The sculptor Bartolomeo Cavaceppi and his studio in Rome served clients in England, Ireland, France, Germany, and Russia, as well as the Pope, by filling out broken sculptures, recombining unrelated fragments as restored statues, and sometimes creating new "antiquities."² Restored and intact, a statue was valued as an aesthetic object whose ancient pedigree and pleasing pose reinforced its owner's reputation for erudition and taste befitting his social rank. This tradition is reflected in The RISD Museum's earliest display of its male figure in the guise of Hermes (acc. no. 03.008, ill. p. 22), which was acquired in 1903 with "restored" lower legs, left arm, supporting stump, and vessel.

Early in the nineteenth century, attitudes began to change. The turning point came in 1816 with the British government's acquisition of marble sculpture gathered on the Athenian Acropolis under Lord Elgin's authority (these came to be called the "Elgin marbles" or the "Parthenon marbles"). Invited by the British to render advice on the treatment of this enormous assemblage, the eminent Italian sculptor Antonio Canova declared that since no living artist was capable of matching their style, the marbles should not be restored.³ His opinion was specific to the Elgin marbles in London, yet its effects were far-reaching.

Other contemporary events also led to a decreased interest in restoring ancient sculpture. After Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo in 1815, the French returned most of the ancient statuary that they had carried off to Paris from Rome. The committee formed in Rome to oversee the repatriation of these works explicitly stated that only unrestored (therefore fragmentary) antiquities would be accepted, presumably as protection against overenthusiastic or inaccurate restoration.⁴ This policy seems to indicate that increased value was placed on authenticity, in addition to the aesthetic effect of sculpture. From a concern for authenticity, it is not far to an interest in historical content.

1 S. Howard, *Antiquity Restored: Essays on the Afterlife of the Antique*. Vienna: 1990, p. 16.

2 D. Walker, "Sculpture," in E. P. Bowron and J. J. Rishel, eds., *Art in Rome in the Eighteenth Century*. London and New York: 2000, pp. 211–23, especially p. 216. See also Howard, *op. cit.*, pp. 98–116; C. A. Picon, *Bartolomeo Cavaceppi: Eighteenth-Century Restorations of Ancient Marble Sculpture from English Private Collections*. London: 1983; N. Ramage, "Restorer and Collector: Notes on Eighteenth-Century Recreations of Roman Statues," in E. K. Gazda, ed., *The Ancient Art of Emulation: Artistic Originality and Tradition from the Present to Classical Antiquity*. Ann Arbor: 2001.

3 I. Jenkins, *Archaeologists and Aesthetes*. London: 1992, pp. 26–27. See also O. Rossi Pinelli, "The Surgery of Memory: Ancient Sculpture and Historical Restoration," in N. S. Price, M. K. Talley, Jr., and A. M. Vaccaro, eds., *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*. Los Angeles: 1996, p. 295.

4 Rossi Pinelli, *op. cit.*, pp. 297–98, who adds: "The suspicion that a restoration could constitute forgery was thus considered, for the first time, within an institutional context." See also Howard, *op. cit.*, p. 24.



Exh. no II MALE FIGURE IN THE GUISE OF HERMES (03.008) Photograph by Arnold.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the advent of archaeological investigations in Italy, Greece, Egypt, and the Near East had yielded broken specimens of ancient statuary that added the intellectual challenge of understanding past civilizations to the romance of discovering buried treasure. While such early archaeology was far from scientific, fragments of sculpture from these explorations carried a more immediate historical character than the restored works displayed in aristocratic houses and museums. Excavated fragments of sculpture, the unaltered material remains of antiquity, were seen as primary evidence of life in the past.

As eighteenth-century neoclassicism evolved toward nineteenth-century romanticism, unrestored ancient statues and ancient architectural ruins were prized as enticements to the imagination. Often they became imbued with a feeling of "pleasurable melancholy" over what had been physically lost and, metaphorically, over extinct cultures.⁵ At odds with this emphasis on a romantic vision of antiquity was the developing interest in ancient history and philology, which promoted an increasingly analytical approach to archaeological excavations and their products.⁶ Some museums began to display their collections in chronological arrangements.⁷ Two apparently antithetical attitudes towards sculptural fragments now existed, although they were probably less divergent than modern scholars suppose.⁸ On one hand, fragmentary sculptures could be valued primarily as aesthetic objects evocative in their brokenness of a long-distant past, to be completed according to one's own subjective interpretation. On the other hand, they could be valued primarily as physical evidence of historical circumstances that, combined with ancient written sources, could aid in a more objective reconstruction of life in ancient Greece or Rome.

Both approaches were transformed by the introduction of photography in the mid-nineteenth century.⁹ Actual views of distant ruins became widely accessible. Photography also permitted the production of images of sculpture apart from any context, as framed by the photographer in his camera lens. Imagination was not denied by photography, but rather was given more information with which to work. Dramatic lighting or clever cropping provided opportunities for the aesthetic presentation of sculpture, sometimes to the extent of making intact statues look like fragments. By assembling photographs of ancient sculpture in quantity, art historians acquired the data for comparative studies, enabling them to define stylistic and thematic categories with far greater precision than previously. It is, after all, through photographs of other similar works that RISD's head of a satyr grasped by the hair can be identified as part of an erotic statuary pair of a nymph rebuffing a seated satyr.¹⁰ Fragmentary, but more complete versions of this group exist in collections in Italy and France. Photographs of them permit the envisioning of the bodies once attached to the Providence head.

Ideally, every object displayed in a museum engages the viewer in some way: through its size, subject, material, reputation, historic significance, or sheer aesthetic appeal. As with the ellipsis of poetry, a fragmentary object engages the viewer by requiring the use of the imagination. There is pleasure in taking up the challenge to make sense of it, to fill out its form in the mind's eye. This attitude, and the scholar's preference for unrestored statues as primary evidence, underline current approaches to exhibiting ancient sculpture. Restoration is minimized to avoid altering or subjectively interpreting the object.¹¹ Like broken statues, classical antiquity appeals in its incompleteness. Since knowledge of the Greek and Roman world will always be partial, interpreting antiquity will always require analytical study coupled with informed imagining.

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5 M. Roth with C. Lyons and C. Merewether, *Irresistible Decay: Ruins Reclaimed*. Los Angeles: 1997, p. 3.

6 S. Marchand, *Down From Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970*. Princeton: 1996, pp. 75-115. See also Rossi Pinelli, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

7 G. Daniel, *A Short History of Archaeology*. London and New York: 1981, pp. 59-60.

8 W. Ernst, "Frames at Work: Museological Imagination and Historical Discourse in Neoclassical Britain," *Art Bulletin*, vol. 75, no. 3 (September 1993), pp. 481-98, especially p. 484.

9 M. Bergstein, "Lonely Aphrodites: On the Documentary Photography of Sculpture," *Art Bulletin*, vol. 74, no. 3 (September 1992), pp. 475-98.

10 B. S. Ridgway, *Hellenistic Sculpture II: The Styles of ca. 200-100 B.C.* Madison: 2000, p. 288 and p. 301, n. 56, with bibliography, classifies this group and other similar nymph-and-satyr groups as "eclectic, popular subjects much appreciated by the Romans and therefore incapable of precise dating..." (p. 288).

11 C. Brand, "Theory of Restoration I" and "Theory of Restoration II," in Price, Talley, and Vaccaro, *op. cit.*, pp. 230-35 and 339-42; cf. "Theory of Restoration III-VI," which in total address the issue of restoration. For an egregious example of dismantling an historic nineteenth-century restoration, see W. Diebold, "The Politics of Derestoration," *Art Journal*, vol. 54, no. 2 (Summer 1995), pp. 60-66.

PORTRAIT OF AUGUSTUS 27–10 BC

Marble (probably Parian);

h. 9 9/16 in. (24.3 cm.)

w. 8 in. (20.4 cm.)

d. 6 7/8 in. (17.5 cm.)

Museum Appropriation Fund

Acc. no. 26.160

Provenience: probably from Italy

B. S. Ridgway, *Catalogue of the Classical Collection, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design: Sculpture*. Providence: 1972, cat. no. 32

1 For the most recent study of Augustan portraiture, see D. Boschung, *Die Bildnisse des Augustus. Das Römische Herrscherbild*, part 1, vol. 2. Berlin: 1993. See his cat. no. 22, p. 118, pl. 17, for the RISD Augustus. See also the review of Boschung by J. Pollini, *Art Bulletin*, vol. 81, no. 4 (December 1999), pp. 723–35. There are five types and two additional subtypes of Augustus portraits.

2 In various parts of the empire, however, his image was sometimes altered in the process of translating the Roman concept of the *princeps* (first citizen) into local notions of leadership. See Pollini, *op. cit.*, p. 729.

3 Vatican Museums, Braccio Nuovo, inv. 2290; see Boschung, *op. cit.*, cat. no. 171, pp. 179–81, pls. 69–70, 82.

4 K. Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*. New York: 1978, pp. 221–24.

5 S.R.F. Price, *Rituals and Power: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor*. New York: 1984, pp. 192–94; Hopkins, *op. cit.*, pp. 221–24.

6 Pollini, *op. cit.*, p. 731.

7 Museo Nazionale Romano, Rome, inv. 56230; Boschung, *op. cit.*, cat. no. 165, pp. 176–77, pls. 80, 148, 214; B. S. Ridgway, *Catalogue of the Classical Collection, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design: Sculpture*. Providence: 1972, cat. no. 32, p. 85, ill. pp. 199–200.

The future emperor Augustus was born Gaius Octavius (Octavian) in Rome on September 23, 63 BC. He was adopted by his great-uncle Julius Caesar in 44 BC. After defeating the forces of Marc Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, Octavian gained sole and undisputed control of the Roman government. He was 32 years old. In 27 BC, the Roman senate bestowed on him the title “Augustus” (“Sacred” or “Revered”), the name by which he came to be known. Under the guise of restoring the Roman Republic (509–31 BC), Augustus ruled Rome from 27 BC until his death in AD 14.

Over two hundred portraits of Augustus survive today.¹ Augustus commissioned official portraits of himself based on a few approved prototypes so that his image would be recognizable to all of his subjects throughout the empire.² These portraits were then sent from Rome to the provinces, where they were copied and distributed for display in great numbers in public squares, baths, market areas, theaters, and law courts across outlying areas, just as in the city of Rome. Augustus’s portraits served to announce significant events and accomplishments during his reign, such as his diplomatic triumph (20 BC) in recovering the Roman legionary standards captured by the Parthians in 53 BC, as depicted on the cuirass of the famous statue from Prima Porta,³ site of Livia’s villa north of Rome. Depending on the message that Augustus wished to convey, his portrait head was combined with stock body types representing him in different roles, among them chief priest of the Roman state religion, hero, military leader, deity, deified emperor.

At times, an imperial portrait substituted for the emperor’s actual presence. For example, trials could not take place without the presence of the emperor’s image. Whenever a provincial governor exercised his power, the presence of the reigning emperor’s portrait was also required in order to give authority to the governor’s acts.⁴ Imperial portraits gradually acquired symbolic power in themselves. Roman citizens, especially in the provinces, appealed directly to these images for aid, attached petitions to them, and even obtained asylum at their feet.⁵

Augustus played an active role in promoting the use of his images in Roman religious practice. He encouraged the worship of his *genius* (procreative spirit) not only by fusing it with the *lares compitalia* (guardian spirits found at all the crossroads), but also by introducing it into the private domestic cult. Augustus’s *genius* was represented by his image. The modifications that Augustus instituted to Roman religious practices ensured that his *genius*, embodied in his portrait, was venerated in public and domestic shrines throughout the empire.

Augustus’s officially approved portrait types were also made available to the “art market.” Driven by competition and a desire to show their status within Roman society,⁶ the wealthy commissioned and purchased his portraits and displayed them in their homes. The emperor’s portraits thus fulfilled propagandistic functions for such patrons, as well as for the government.

The RISD portrait depicts Augustus with a wide forehead, small and deep-set eyes, prominent cheekbones, and short chin. The jawline and locks of hair are more clearly defined on the left side than on the right, indicating that the head was turned toward the right. The head was made for insertion into a stock body clad in a toga. The manner in which the head’s top and back are left unfinished suggests that this representation depicted Augustus with a portion of the toga pulled up and draped over the head, a portrayal corresponding to his role of priest. The original would have been similar to the Augustus statue from the Via Labicana in Rome.⁷



Exh. no. I PORTRAIT OF AUGUSTUS (26.160) Photograph by Del Bogart.

Dietrich Boschung has noted parallels between the Providence head and a portrait of Augustus in Florence, particularly in the eyebrows and in the width and length of the lower portion of the face.⁸ Ridgway has cited the general similarity of the RISD head's facial features, particularly the cheeks and mouth, to a head from Leptis Magna,⁹ while noting the Leptis portrait's wearier, older face and more dynamic, "pictorial rendering" of the hair. In contrast, the artist of the RISD portrait seems to have "intentionally smoothed over all lines and wrinkles."¹⁰ The RISD head's surfaces are indeed generally smoother, the facial features more idealized, and the carving shallower, especially in the treatment of the locks of hair. Boschung assigned the RISD head to the early to mid-Augustan period, about 27 to 10 BC, believing that it may have been influenced in part by the strongly classicizing style of Augustus's Prima Porta type, created around 27 BC.¹¹

The RISD, Florence, and Leptis portraits belong to Augustus's principal early portrait type, the Alcudia type,¹² characterized by a heightened realism of the facial features, an accentuated twist and inclination of the head, plastically rendered locks of hair, and tension in the brows and forehead.¹³ The Alcudia type was probably created around 38/37 BC (ten years before he became emperor) to counterbalance Augustus's youth and political inexperience with an image equal to his authority. This portrait type was in use for about ten years: of the more than two hundred surviving portraits of Augustus, twenty-eight belong to this type.

GEORGINA E. BORRAMEO

8 Galleria degli Uffizi, no. 1914.76. See Boschung, *op. cit.*, cat. no. 10, p. 112, pl. 9.

9 Tripoli, Archaeological Museum, inv. 477. See *ibid.*, cat. no. 31, pl. 10.

10 Ridgway, *op. cit.*, pp. 84–85.

11 Boschung, *op. cit.*, p. 118. Created over a long time span, Augustan portraits range in date from about 43 BC to after his death in AD 14. They were also found throughout the empire. It is difficult to date portraits of Augustus accurately on stylistic grounds alone, due to the differences among regional styles and the variability in workshop practices.

12 Boschung renamed this type, formerly known as the Octavian or Actium type, as the Alcudia type, after a portrait in a private collection in Alcudia, Mallorca; see Boschung, *op. cit.*, cat. no. 6, p. 110, pls. 7–8.

13 *Ibid.*, pp. 11–22.

HEAD OF AN AMAZON AD 70–90

Marble; h. 10 in. (25.3 cm.)

w. 8 3/4 in. (22.4 cm.)

d. 10 1/4 in. (26.1 cm.)

Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke

Acc. no. 01.005

Provenience: unknown

B. S. Ridgway, *Catalogue of the Classical Collection, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design: Sculpture*. Providence: 1972, cat. no. 12

According to tradition, the Amazons were a race of female warriors who lived just beyond the border of the known Greek world. Signifying the danger and romantic wonder of the foreign and unknown, they appeared often in art as enemies of the Greeks. The Museum's head originally belonged to a full-length statue, a replica of a well known series of wounded Amazons. This is apparent from the break at its neck and also from the top of its head: an area on the left half is without rendering of hair and would have been the resting point for the right hand.

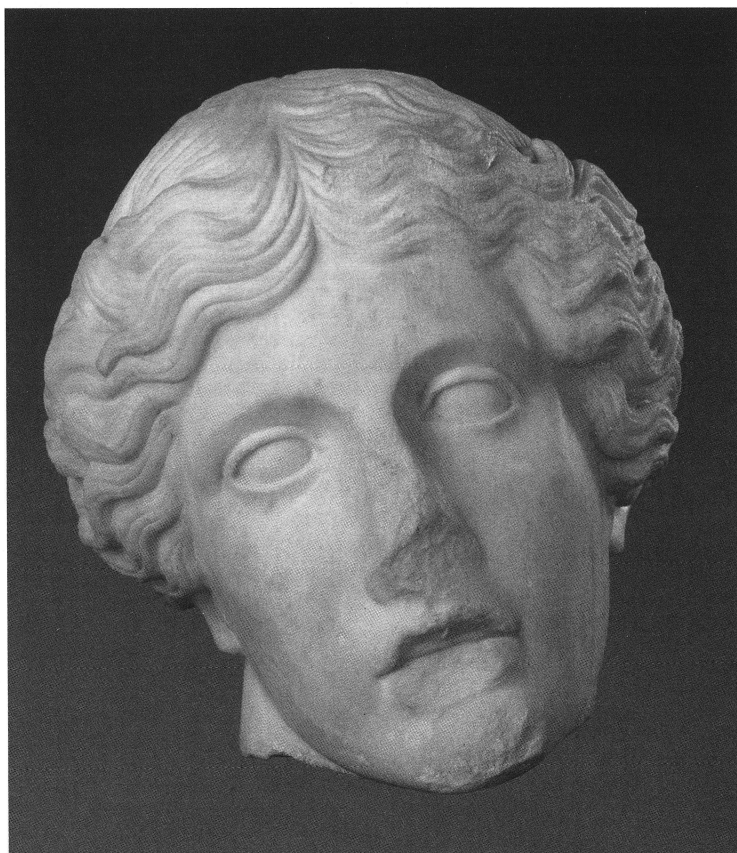
This piece is one of over fifteen extant examples of heads belonging to a particular sculptural representation of Amazons known as the Sciarra type.¹ Traditional scholarship has tied the Sciarra type to four other types that taken together may represent the subject of a contest in antiquity. According to the ancient Roman author Pliny the Elder (AD 23–79), five famous sculptors created figures of Amazons for dedication to the deity Artemis at her temple at Ephesos (a major Ionian city on the coast of Asia Minor). The Artemision, constructed in the sixth century BC, was one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The five Amazon types have been construed to relate to the works of Pliny's five contestants, who attempted to decide among themselves whose statue was the finest.

While examples of five types may survive, it is unlikely that all five originated at the time mentioned by Pliny.² At least two types may be Roman creations based on fifth-century BC prototypes. In fact, the earliest extant examples of the Sciarra type date back only to the period of Augustus (31 BC–AD 14), suggesting that the type may be one of these later Roman creations.

The well known representations of wounded Amazons illustrate a new understanding of the intent behind various groups of Roman replicas. For decades the sculptures that comprised such series have been deemed “default creations”; those which, it was thought, reflected a lack of originality on the part of Roman sculptors. Scholars now believe that the Romans had specific programs in mind for certain settings.³

Roman designers chose the particular images on which to model their replicas based on the desire to use immediately recognizable forms to convey Roman messages. They needed such sculptures in quantity. Repetition was both a conscious strategy, one which helped to convey a desired program,⁴ and an important visual element: it created “symmetry, rhythm and harmony with the architectural setting.”⁵ Prototypes appropriate to the setting, whether bath, theater, or gymnasium, could be physically altered in order to fit their new sites, if necessary. Selected and created with a specific site in mind, the sculptures gave each space its distinctive identity and created the appropriate atmosphere,⁶ as when familiar representations of athletes were used to adorn gymnasia.

The wounded Amazon is just such a type, for its fame in antiquity is attested by the passage in Pliny and its popularity by the numerous examples that survive today. In fact, replicas of two Amazon types were situated at Hadrian's villa at Tivoli. The emperor Hadrian, then, was content to display marble “imitations,”⁷ so such “copies” were clearly not considered to be inferior works. Finely carved from costly material, their derivative nature



Exh. no. 8 HEAD OF AN AMAZON (01.005)

was not an issue. It would seem that Hadrian selected them with a distinct purpose in mind. The iconography of the Amazon as archer – in its original context quite near to that of the deity Artemis, to whom the original five Amazons are said by Pliny to have been dedicated at Ephesos – is close to that of the Roman Virtus.⁸ Placed in a Roman context, then, the piece may extol this particular Roman value, or may simply signify endurance in an aesthetically pleasing form. Repeated in number and with variation, the group of Amazons, like any specific programmatic display, must have been a powerful and meaningful sight.

A recent study on the Sciarra type dates the Providence Amazon to the Flavian period (AD 70–90), based on stylistic considerations.⁹

CRISPIN CORRADO GOULET

1 The type was named after the statue from the Palazzo Sciarra, Rome, which is today in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen; see R. Bol, *Amazones Volneratae: Untersuchungen zu den Ephesischen Amazonenstatuen*. Mainz: 1998, p. 35. The Sciarra type was previously known as the Berlin/Lansdowne type, after the replicas in Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Antikensammlung, and in New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art (no. 32.11.4), formerly of the Lansdowne Collection.

2 A. Furtwängler (*Masterpieces of Greek Sculpture*. Chicago: 1964, 1st American ed., pp. 128–32, 247) spoke out in favor of the validity of Pliny's account, and in fact attempted to assign each of the five Amazon types to a famous fifth-century BC sculptor. He attributed the Sciarra type to Polykleitos. Furtwängler's attribution of the Sciarra type is shared by scholars such as G.M.A. Richter (*Catalogue of Greek Sculptures in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. Cambridge [MA]: 1954, pp. 29–30), and, most recently, R. Bol ("Die Amazone des Polyklet," in H. Beck, P. C. Bol, M. Buckling, eds., *Polyklet: Der Bildhauer der griechischen Klassik*. Mainz am Rhein: 1990, p. 228). B. S. Ridgway has questioned Pliny's account and thus Furtwängler's assignment, arguing that only two of the five types originated in the fifth century BC, and that it may have been Augustus who added the Sciarra type; see B. S. Ridgway, "The Five Ephesian Amazons," in *Proceedings of the Xth International Congress of Classical Archaeology*, vol. II. Ankara: 1978, p. 769.

3 "The specific message that even Greek works conveyed in a Roman context [was often] quite different from that of their original setting"; B. S. Ridgway, "Roman Bronze Statuary – Beyond Technology," in C. C. Mattusch, ed., *The Fire of Hephaistos: Large Classical Bronzes from North American Collections*. Cambridge (MA): 1996, pp. 122–23.

4 "We should recognize that the repeated image played a vital role in Roman visual communication as something familiar, emblematic, and visually compelling"; E. K. Gazda, "Roman Sculpture and the Ethos of Emulation: Reconsidering Repetition," in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, vol. 97 (1995), p. 146.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 144.

6 M. Marvin, "Copying in Roman Sculpture: The Replica Series," in K. Preciado, ed., *Retaining the Original: Multiple Originals, Copies and Reproductions* (Studies in the History of Art, vol. 20). Washington, DC: 1989, p. 33.

7 Ridgway, *op. cit.*, 1996, p. 134.

8 The personification of virtue. Marvin, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

9 Bol, *op. cit.*, 1998, table 28.

MALE FIGURE first century AD

Marble; h. 44 7/8 in. (114 cm.)

w. 21 1/2 in. (54.6 cm.)

d. 12 1/2 in. (31.8 cm.)

Museum Appropriation Fund

Acc. no. 26.159

Provenience: unknown

B. S. Ridgway, *Catalogue of the Classical Collection, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design: Sculpture*. Providence: 1972, cat. no. 13

1 M. Marvin, "Roman Sculptural Reproductions, or Polykleitos: The Sequel," in A. Hughes and E. Ranft, eds., *Sculpture and Its Reproductions*. London: 1997, p. 23.

2 O. Palagia, "Imitation of Herakles in Ruler Portraiture: A Survey, from Alexander to Maximinus Daza," *Boreas*, vol. 9 (1986), pp. 145, 148.

Conservation Note

The sculpture was previously mounted onto limestone blocks with brass dowels set in lead, all placed on a wooden pedestal. Over the years, the dowels had come loose, rendering the mount unstable. In addition, the old mounting did not accurately position the lunging figure in space. All old mounting hardware has been removed and replaced, and the sculpture has been remounted on a newly designed pedestal in an orientation that better reflects the sculpture's dynamic pose. The surface has also been cleaned of airborne grime and paint spatters to reveal the pale gray, slightly veined texture of the marble surface.

KENT SEVERSON

Until recently, this piece was mounted as if the torso's weight were borne by the right leg, but the tilt of the pubic area indicates that it is the left leg that should be bearing the weight. The extension of what remains of the arms and the peculiar position of the torso, which is twisted a bit forward and away from the weight-bearing left leg, show that the figure was not at rest. He was lunging with left leg forward and possibly bent, a theory supported by the position of the testes, which fall correctly in this stance. The figure has now been remounted accordingly.

Based on its previous mount, the Providence figure was for many years thought to be an adaptation of the statue of a youthful victor tying a fillet around his head, the fifth-century BC *Diadoumenos* credited to Polykleitos. The rethinking of the Providence statue's pose, however, has required the rethinking of its identification. The new stance highlights other aspects of the Providence torso that are at variance with the *Diadoumenos* of Polykleitos – such as the Providence torso's subtle musculature – and suggests further that RISD's figure was not based on that type. Ironically, the lifting of assignment to the Polykleitan *Diadoumenos* type has left a daunting question of identity.

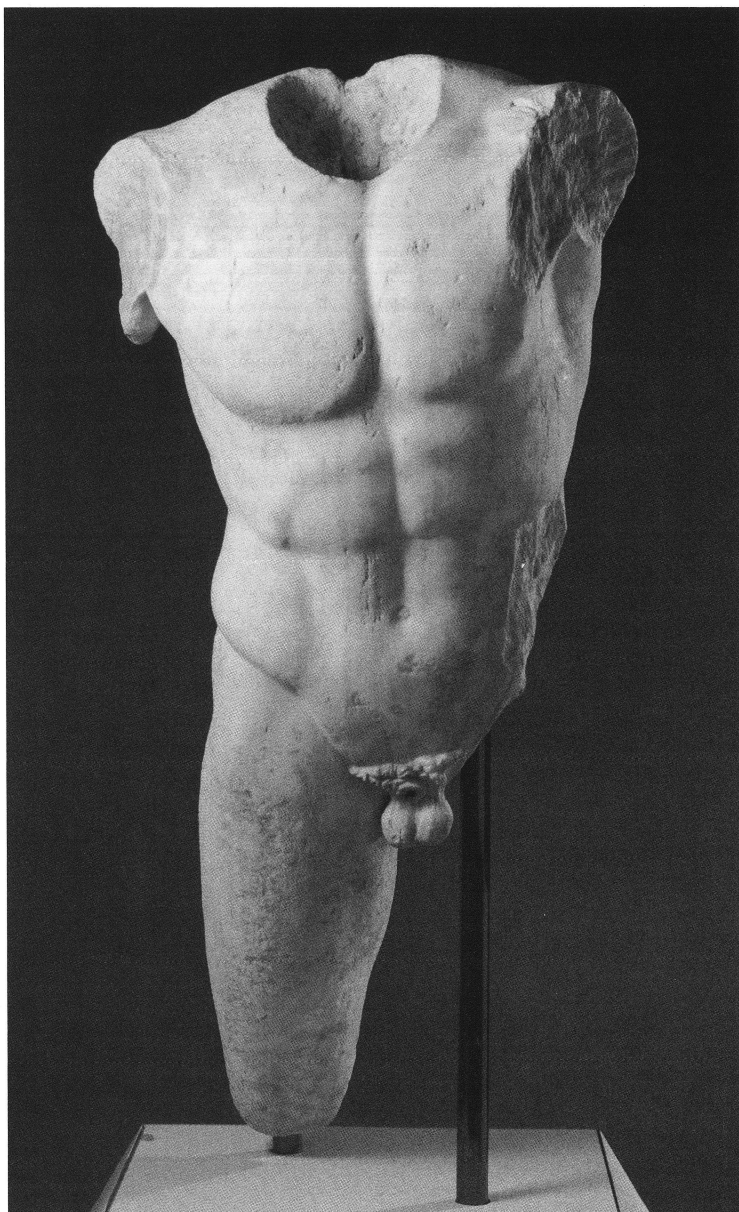
In contrast to what was believed earlier, recent scholarship acknowledges the fact that in many cases a piece of Roman sculpture may not have had a specific prototype, that there was no clear single original from which it was "copied." For this reason, restoration is frequently out of the question, as it is for the Providence piece. There are too many possible arm and hand positions, attributes, and supports, to be able to know with any certainty how the piece was originally completed. Furthermore, the lack of inscriptions, companion statues, and knowledge of where the piece was found precludes the assignment of identity or a true understanding of intended meaning and context of the Providence piece.

The RISD figure must be viewed as a fragment. It should be studied in terms of what remains and appreciated for what it represents and the information it provides. The sculpture is of a slightly over-life-size male in his adolescence or older, as indicated by the presence of pubic hair. The figure's left arm was raised, his right arm extended backward and probably downward as well. His weight was borne on the left foot, and he was lunging forward, as previously discussed. A cavity between the shoulders indicates that the figure may have been prepared to receive a portrait head.

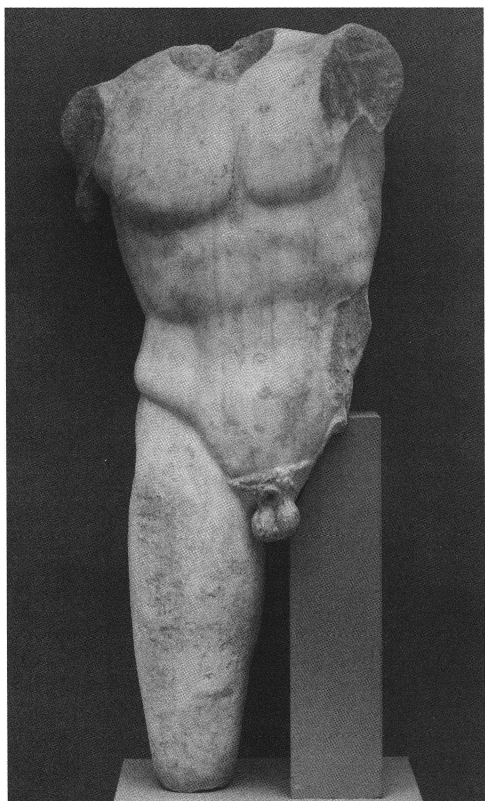
In earlier times, certain Greek athletes had been allowed to set up their own highly idealized portrait statues in sanctuaries at the sites of their athletic victories. The athletic body type became very popular in the Roman world and was brought into the public realm in the production of Roman honorary portraiture. It was favored by imperial and non-imperial persons alike, for the individual was paid substantial tribute by his presentation in heroic nudity with a fit, virile, and youthful body; a presentation that boasted a tradition of many centuries and an impressive list of those so honored. Given the proper attribute, however, the same athletic body type could immediately be transformed into that of a legendary figure or deity, should the patron wish another layer of meaning expressed in the final piece.¹ This practice was especially common in imperial circles, as attested by the depictions of emperors such as Domitian (reigned AD 81–96) and Commodus (reigned AD 180–192) in the guise of Herakles.²

The lack of attributes and the incomplete extremities make precise dating of the Providence figure difficult. The rendering of the pubic hair suggests drill work appropriate to the first century of our era.

CRISPIN CORRADO GOULET



Exh. no 5 MALE FIGURE, as remounted (26.159)



MALE FIGURE, as previously mounted Photograph by Robert Thornton.

PORTRAIT OF A BOY IN THE GUISE
OF A DEITY late first/second century AD
Marble; h. 7 in. (17.8 cm.)

w. 6 in. (15.2 cm.)

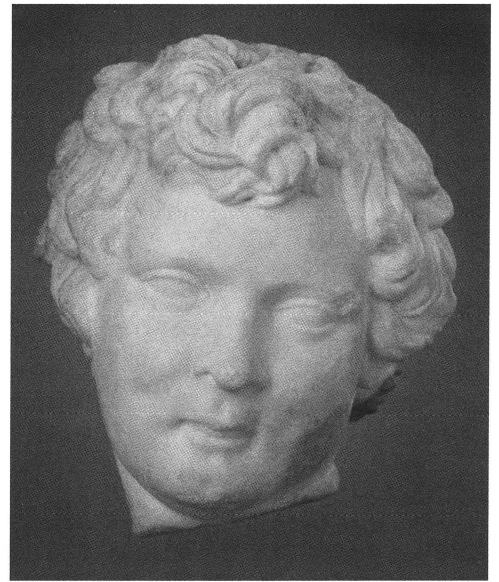
d. 6 5/8 in. (16.9 cm.)

Gift of Mrs. Gustav Radeke

Acc. no. 03.009

Provenience: found in Italy

B. S. Ridgway, *Catalogue of the Classical
Collection, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School
of Design: Sculpture*. Providence: 1972,
cat. no. 20



Exh. no 9 PORTRAIT OF A BOY IN THE GUISE OF A DEITY
(03.009)

1 Cf. B. S. Ridgway, *Catalogue of the Classical Collection, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design: Sculpture*. Providence: 1972, cat. no. 20, p. 57, ill. pp. 171-73.

2 Cf. A. K. Massner, *Bildnisangleichung*. Berlin: 1982, figs. 27 b-c and 29 a-c; and F. S. Johansen, "The Sculpted Portraits of Caligula," in *Ancient Portraits in the J. P. Getty Museum*, vol. I. Malibu: 1987, pp. 87-106, figs. 20, 22-24.

3 Evidence against such Julio-Claudian identification lies in the fact that sculptural examples of Julio-Claudian imperial youths do not exhibit such long and seemingly free or unkempt hair, which was more common in the Antonine period, as youthful likenesses of Marcus Aurelius attest; cf. K. Fittschen, *Prinzenbildnisse Antoninischer Zeit*. Mainz: 1999, pl. 5, a bust now in Modena.

4 Ridgway, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

5 The braid appears, for example, on a sleeping Eros dated to the second half of the first century AD in the J. Paul Getty Museum (no. 73.AA.95); cf. G. Koch and K. Wright, eds., *Roman Funerary Sculpture: Catalogue of the Collections in the J. Paul Getty Museum*. Malibu: 1988, cat. no. 43. For an example dated to the second century AD, see S. B. Matheson, "The Divine Claudia: Women as Goddesses in Roman Art," in D.E.E. Kleiner and S. B. Matheson, eds., *I, Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome*. New Haven: 1996, p. 183 and fig. 1.

Thought for many years to represent Eros,¹ this head exhibits features that suggest it may have been a portrait. These details include fine and supple modeling of the cheeks, dimpled proper right cheek, protruding upper lip, and receding chin. The profile view perhaps best illustrates the individuality of the face. In fact, the Providence head does exhibit features of an imperial figure, Gaius Caesar (Caligula, reigned AD 37-41), including straight brow line, long and narrow nose, protruding upper lip area and thin upper lip, receding chin, abundant hair at the back of the neck, general profile, and dimple on the right cheek.² As no youthful portraits of the emperor have yet been positively identified, such an identification may not be assigned with certainty.³

The distinctive curly hairstyle of the Providence piece is commonly found on depictions of youthful mythological figures, in particular Eros. B. S. Ridgway believed this head to represent an Eros,⁴ although she was not able to discern a particular prototype and found troublesome the knot of hair substituted for the typical braid. Investigation has revealed, however, that there is a braid on the RISD head. The hair is gathered loosely on the top of the Providence head to form a front-falling braid that terminates in a knot of twisted hair at the center of the upper forehead. Both braids and topknots (with or without braids) are extremely common on representations of images of Eros from Hellenistic (ca. 323-31 BC) into Roman times.⁵ The topknot was not solely reserved for Eros, for it also appears on representations of the youthful Harpokrates,⁶ the infant Herakles,⁷ Attis, and a youthful Dionysos,⁸ among others. These exam-

ples may suggest that the Providence head is a representation of one such mythological figure. In addition to being commonly depicted with long, flowing locks and a topknot, these deities all had cults that were exceedingly popular well into the Roman period. Similar and in many ways interrelated,⁹ the cults also shared the promise of a happy afterlife, which may have been the intent behind the use of representations of these deities in funerary portrait sculpture.

Distinctive features such as those of the Providence head are not typically found on idealized mythological figures.¹⁰ Perhaps, then, the Providence piece is an example of a blend between the two: a portrait statue with personalized physical features, styled into an overall type of a legendary or mythical youth. Such a practice is well established for adults, who were often represented with portrait heads inserted into stock body types of well known deities or mythical figures. The practice was also used for sculptures of children, especially in the second and third centuries AD and often in a funerary context.¹¹ In these works, the deceased was represented with a portrait head and the attributes of a deity in order to suggest that he or she possessed qualities particular to that deity, or that (especially in the case of children) the deceased would be under the protection of that deity in the afterlife. Examples include the Antonine-period (AD 138-192) head of a boy in the guise of Dionysos now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, which is of similar size to the Providence sculpture (h. 8 1/4 in.; 21 cm.); and the second-century AD statue of a boy in the guise of Herakles in Tarragona.¹²

Posthumous portraits of youthful members of the imperial family in the guise of deities are known as early as the Augustan period (31 BC–AD 14). Suetonius (AD 69–140) in his *Life of Gaius* [Caligula] 7, for example, states:

Germanicus married Agrippina the Elder, daughter of Marcus Agrippa and Julia, who bore him nine children. Two died in infancy, and a third, an extremely likeable boy, during early childhood. Livia dedicated a statue of him, dressed as a cupid, to Capitoline Venus; Augustus kept a replica in his bedroom and used to kiss it fondly whenever he entered.

Perhaps the Providence head is also an example of the portrait statue of a cherished child who had passed away – indeed, one with a striking resemblance to Caligula, brother of the child mentioned by Suetonius – and whose gentle features were assigned to the familiar likeness of a playful and protective youthful deity.¹³

The curly-headed, impish Eros has roots in the Hellenistic period,¹⁴ but the Providence piece is likely of later date. Although the long locks of hair have parallels in Antonine portraiture, drill work was often obvious in the rendering of the hair, the irises and pupils of the eyes, and the facial hair at this late date. The Providence piece lacks this obvious drill work in the hair and eyes, suggesting that the piece must have been created much earlier. Although it was not used all over, a drill was in fact used in carving this piece, as may be noted especially around the ears, and although it is true that most portraits after the Hadrianic period (after AD 138) had incised eyes, there are examples of youths' portraits from these periods that are quite similar to the Providence piece in the rendering of eyes. A second-century female child's portrait (no. 96.698) now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, exhibits plastic modeling of the eyebrows along with eyes that are not incised, just as on the Providence piece.¹⁵ Another example appears in the Cleveland Museum of Art (no. 85.79),¹⁶ the statue of a boy thought to be of Antonine date, although the piece, like the Providence head, does not display the typical second-century drill work in the hair, nor are the eyes incised.

Two portraits from the late first to early second centuries are similar in style to the Providence piece: the first- or second-century AD head of a boy now in the Princeton Art Museum (no. 52–63)¹⁷ and the so-called Octavia III of Claudian date (AD 41–54), now in Baiae.¹⁸ These two examples are believed to represent youths of the imperial family.¹⁹ The Providence head and the Princeton and Baiae portraits share an approximate size, an age portrayed (around three or four years old), supple and fleshy rendering of portrait features, slight smile, flowing locks, and a seemingly similar lack of the customary obvious drill work in the hair and eyes. The hairstyles on the Princeton and Baiae portraits, as well as the Providence head, are similarly at variance with typical portraits of youths of the time, which usually featured close-cropped hair for boys and long hair tied back in some fashion for girls; yet the Princeton and the Baiae pieces do in fact date to the late first or second century of our era. This combination of factors allows the possibility of a similar date for the Providence piece.

CRISPIN CORRADO GOULET

6 E.g. Alexandria, Greco-Roman Museum (no. 25784), cf. *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (hereafter, *LIMC*) IV.1 (1988), s.v. *Harpokrates* 5, p. 418.

7 E.g. Tarragona Archaeological Museum, cf. *LIMC* IV.1, s.v. *Herakles* 1246, p. 787; dated to the second century AD.

8 This includes Palaimon also, e.g. Walters Art Gallery, no. 54.724; cf. A. P. Kozloff and D. G. Mitten, *The Gods Delight: The Human Figure in Classical Bronze*. Cleveland: 1988, p. 359, and cat. no. 72, a bronze figurine of Julio-Claudian date, probably AD 20–60; as well as Triptolemos.

9 There is known conflation in imagery of these deities. Eros, for instance, could acquire attributes of such deities as the Seasons, Attis, Harpokrates, Apollo, Mercury, Herakles, Dionysos, and Tritons, among others. Such practice was particularly widespread in arts of the first and second centuries of our era. Eros, for example,

shared imagery with Harpokrates from the Hellenistic period on; cf. a second- or first-century BC figurine now in Detroit (no. 24.139), as seen in E. K. Gazda, ed., *The Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii: Ancient Ritual, Modern Muse*. Ann Arbor: 2000, p. 209 and cat. no. 75.

10 As stated, no prototype has been found for this piece, nor other replicas.

11 J. Allen, in Kleiner and Matheson, *op. cit.*, p. 198; S. B. Matheson, "The Divine Claudia: Women as Goddesses in Roman Art," in Kleiner and Matheson, *op. cit.*, p. 190.

12 Cf. G.M.A. Richter, *Catalogue of Greek Sculptures in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*. Cambridge (MA): 1954, figs. 176 a–b, pl. cxxiii; and n. 7, above.

13 Of a work depicting an infant Caracalla in the guise of the Greek hero Herakles strangling snakes (ca. AD 190, now in the Museo Capitolino, Rome), Kleiner states: "Such mythological conceits were popular in Antonine court circles. The taste for such artificial but

symbolically charged portraiture continued to be the vogue under the Severans"; D.E.E. Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture*. New Haven: 1992, p. 322 and fig. 285.

14 *Ibid.*

15 Kleiner and Matheson, *op. cit.*, p. 173 and cat. no. 127.

16 A. Herrmann, "The Boy with the Jumping Weights," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, vol. 80, no. 7 (1993), p. 298 and fig. 1.

17 Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 143 and cat. no. 76.

18 C. B. Rose, *Dynastic Commemoration and Imperial Portraiture in the Julio-Claudian Period*. Cambridge (England): 1997, pp. 82–3, cat. no. 4 and pls. 62–63.

19 Allen, *op. cit.*, p. 143; and Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

YOUTHFUL FIGURE WEARING

A TORQUE AD 138–192

Marble; h. 18 11/16 in. (47.5 cm.)

w. 10 1/8 in. (25.7 cm.)

d. 8 5/8 in. (21.8 cm.)

Museum Appropriation Fund

Acc. no. 26.158

Provenience: unknown

B. S. Ridgway, *Catalogue of the Classical Collection, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design: Sculpture*. Providence: 1972, cat. no. 36

1 A. Herrmann, "The Boy with the Jumping Weights," *The Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art*, vol. 80, no. 7 (1993), p. 314.

2 G. Koch and K. Wright, eds., *Roman Funerary Sculpture: Catalogue of the Collections in the J. Paul Getty Museum*. Malibu: 1988, p. 102 and cat. no. 37.

3 Eros has long been associated with untimely death, so his presence is appropriate in funerary statuary. See in addition to the mourning Eros mentioned by A. Herrmann (who stated that the piece could easily have been adapted to carry a portrait head, *op. cit.*, p. 317), a representation in Leptis Magna (no. 9), as seen in *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* (hereafter, *LIMC*) III.1 (1986), s.v. *Eros/Amor, Cupido* 555, p. 1019: a marble piece dating to the second or third century or our era, now missing its head, a figure holding a goose.

4 E.g. Tarragona Archaeological Museum (no. 12258) and Palazzo dei Conservatori in Rome (no. 1103), cf. *LIMC* IV.1, s.v. *Herakles* 1246 and 1226, pp. 786–87, among others. Although of differing sizes and media, these four figures all share the youthful body, swayed hips, and portrait head.

The Providence figure represents a nude child of three or four years with hips swayed to the proper left, dancing or in motion of some kind. The cavity for the neck suggests that the torso may have borne a portrait head. As such it was perhaps displayed in honor of a child who died prematurely, for the body type of the Providence piece became popular in the realm of funerary sculpture.¹ The suitability in such a context of this kind of youthful body, nude with swayed hips, is indicated in a late second-century grave relief for a two-year-old boy now in the J. Paul Getty Museum (no. 78.AA.335).² There are representations across media of youthful mythological figures in this pose as well, many with torsos very similar to the Providence piece in fleshiness, age represented, and size. In fact, funerary portrait statues of youths commonly depicted the deceased in the guise of a deity. While Eros was a popular choice for representations in this realm,³ the youthful Herakles was also common,⁴ as were Attis and Harpokrates.

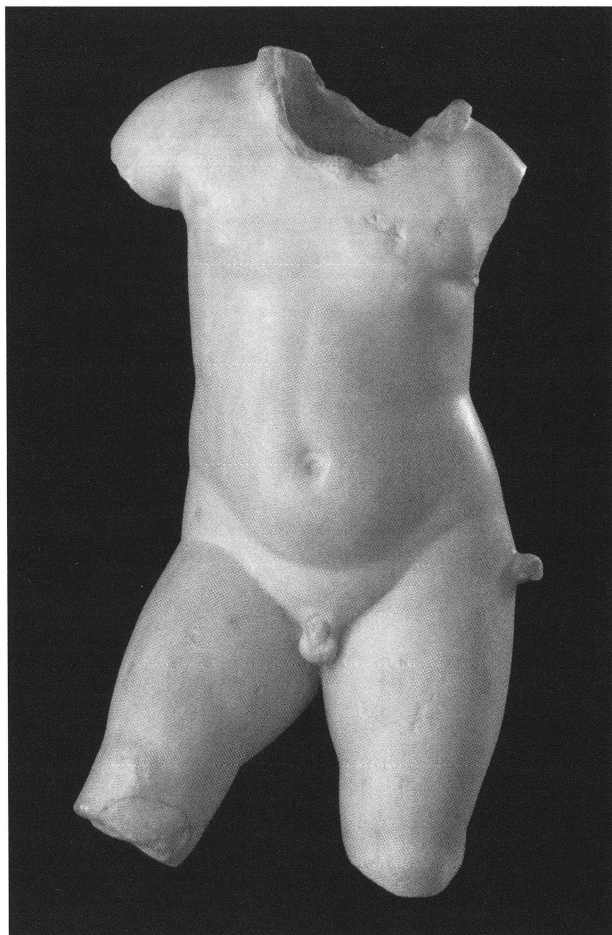
Also of interest on the Providence piece is the distinctive tubular motif visible to either side of the neck break: a torque. It is an attribute that not only lends identity to the child portrayed, but also camouflages the physical join at the point where an inserted portrait head would have met the torso. Large and twisted in imitation of precious metal, the decorative neck torque on the piece was formerly thought to be an indication of the figure's "barbarian" status. The torque was traditional to people of Celtic descent and has been taken in the past as an indication that the Providence figure was that of a "foreign" child.⁵ It was not believed that Roman youths wore such "foreign" ornaments.

This assumption requires reconsideration. While places outside their borders were considered distinctly foreign by the earlier Greeks, the Romans conquered many distant lands and, especially in the second century of our era, adopted some of the practices and luxury items of these peoples, such as jewelry. While few extant examples of the torque remain in relief on sculptures, similar neck ornaments are rendered on representations of children of the Roman period in a funerary context throughout the empire, as seen in many examples of the so-called mummy portraits of Egypt. Of these, numerous images of both male and female children show large, bulky, and twisted neck ornaments. These include particularly the youthful male figures in the Brooklyn Museum of Art (no. 41.848) and the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin (no. 1902.4).⁶

The torque itself may have originated in the East. Most of the child-deities mentioned earlier are connected with mystery religions that flowered in Eastern lands conquered by the Romans. Horus-Harpokrates is an example, with roots in Egypt. Roman representations exist from the imperial era of these child-deities wearing torques,⁷ such as Attis, as seen in a work now in the Staatliche Museen, Berlin (no. 3779), which is dated to between 100 BC and AD 100.⁸ Eros, as seen in a painted representation from Pompeii now in the National Archaeological Museum, Naples (no. 9207),⁹ is also depicted wearing a torque.

Rather than a sign of barbarity or foreignness, the torque was originally an indicator of divinity, suggestive of protection.¹⁰ If, in fact, it appeared on the youthful torso as an attribute of a child-deity, as mentioned above, the torque may be singularly fitting. Taken along with the likelihood of a portrait head, it may very well establish the sculpture as a funerary portrait statue, an appropriate memorial to a deceased son.

The question of its date is a difficult one, for no head nor attribute remains other than the torque. A. Herrmann discusses a specific replica series of similar youthful figures with possible Hellenistic origin.¹¹ The figures in the series are generally dated to the late first and early second centuries



Exh. no 12 YOUTHFUL FIGURE WEARING A TORQUE (26.158)

of our era because of the rendering of hair and facial features and their distinctive plinths, physical evidence missing in the Providence statue. The popularity of such small works in the round and the similarity in rendering of age, pose, and weight suggest that the Providence torso be counted among such pieces of the late first to third centuries.¹²

Both a figure from Leptis Magna and a figure of a child of similar age and height now in the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art (no. 208.1974)¹³ date to the second or third century; but the latter figure shows lesser polish and workmanship than Providence piece. The quality of the Providence torso and its surface finish are suggestive of an Antonine date (AD 138–192).¹⁴ The findings discussed above for the figure's only extant attribute, the torque, also suggests the late date, a time when such ornaments were more commonly depicted on youths across artistic media.

CRISPIN CORRADO GOULET

5 B. S. Ridgway, *Catalogue of the Classical Collection, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design: Sculpture*. Providence: 1972, pp. 92–94. The torque was the “Celtic national symbol”; cf. G. Becatti, *Oreficerie Antiche*. Rome: 1955, p. 104. Cf. also R. R. Holloway, “Who’s Who on the Ara Pacis,” *Alessandria e il mondo ellenistico-romano*. Rome: 1984, pp. 625–28.

6 These examples date to the end of the second century of our era; cf. S. Walker, ed., *Ancient Faces: Mummy Portraits from Roman Egypt*. New York: 2000, cat. nos. 45–46, among others.

7 Herakles may be an exception, as a lion skin is usually tied around his neck.

8 LIMC III.1, s.v. *Attis* 345, p. 38.

9 *Ibid.*, s.v. *Eros/Amor, Cupido* 476, p. 1011.

10 The torque was a constant attribute of the Celtic gods of the Gauls, cf. an Augustan-age statuette of a divinity in Dijon (no. 355) in *Vercingétorix et Alésia*. Paris: 1994, cat. no. 306; a funerary relief featuring Cernunnus/Mercury from Reims (P. MacKendrick, *Roman France*. New York: 1972, p. 164); and statuettes of gods such as Bouray, Orsennes, and Euffigneix, as seen in J. L. Brunaux, *The Celtic Gauls: Gods, Rites and Sanctuaries*. London: 1988, pp. 67–68. Further, Brunaux states on p. 74 that “It is not unlikely that huge torques specially manufactured for the cult were attached to these sculptures [of the Celtic gods]; and attributes of a god seem to have served better than an image, in the earliest times and before the process of figuration.”

11 Herrmann, *op. cit.*, p. 306. The figures in this series appear along with attributes of jumping weights.

12 For all of these examples, Hellenistic originals are suggested.

13 Leptis Magna figure, see n. 3; for the other, see G. Ferrari, C. M. Nielsen, and K Olson, eds., *The Classical Collection: The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago*. Chicago: 1998, p. 151.

14 Herrmann, *op. cit.*, 1993, p. 300; and D.E.E. Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture*. New Haven: 1992, p. 322.

FEMALE FIGURE second century AD,
after a fifth-century BC prototype
Marble; h. 37 3/4 in. (95.8 cm.)
w. 14 15/16 in. (38 cm.)
d. 8 15/16 in. (22.7 cm.)
Museum Appropriation Fund and Special Gift
Acc. no. 23.351
Provenience: unknown
B. S. Ridgway, *Catalogue of the Classical
Collection, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School
of Design: Sculpture*. Providence: 1972,
cat. no. 14

1 Cf. H. Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum*, vol. III: *Nerva to Hadrian*. London: 1936, pp. cl and 541, pl. 99:4; e.g. a coin of Sabina as Sabina Augusta with reverse legend "Veneri Genetrici."

2 A. Claridge, *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide*. Oxford: 1998, p. 150.

3 A. M. Knoblauch in B. S. Ridgway, *Greek Sculpture in the Art Museum, Princeton University: Greek Originals, Roman Copies and Variants*. Princeton: 1994, pp. 50–53. The type is named for the best replica, now in the Louvre, originally from Naples; the type was previously known as the Aphrodite Frejus (cf. B. S. Ridgway, *Catalogue of the Classical Collection, Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design: Sculpture*. Providence: 1972, p. 40). Because the Providence piece is a late Roman work, it will be referred to in this essay as Venus, even if the Hadrianic Venus Genetrix was derived from an earlier statue of Aphrodite.

4 M. Brinke, "Die Aphrodite Louvre-Neapel," *Antike Plastik*, vol. 25 (1996), p. 7 ff. These examples exhibit much variation.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 18 ff.

6 S. B. Matheson, "The Divine Claudia: Women as Goddesses in Roman Art" in D.E.E. Kleiner and S. B. Matheson, eds., *I, Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome*. New Haven: 1996, p. 184.

7 Appian, *Civil Wars II*, 102; as did Hadrian, the Temple of Roma and Venus.

The pose and garments of this female figure are reminiscent of the image of Venus Genetrix, as the goddess appeared on imperial coinage of the second century of our era,¹ along with the legend "Veneri Genetrici" to celebrate the role of the goddess as "universal mother."² The type, known as the Louvre-Naples,³ is well known from many extant marble examples in the round⁴ and may be derived from a late fifth-century BC Greek figure of Aphrodite. Roman examples of the Louvre-Naples type predominantly date to the period of Trajan (reigned AD 98–117) or later and attest to the popularity of the type at this time.⁵

The Providence piece exhibits a peculiar neck surface and preparation for head attachment that is at variance with the usual for portrait insertions. While the possibility exists that the piece originally held the idealized head of the prototype, in all likelihood this sculpture was at some point used as an honorary portrait statue. The Julian family believed that they were direct descendants of Venus. She was the symbolic mother and patron goddess of the family.⁶ Julius Caesar built a temple for her in 46 BC,⁷ and shortly afterwards, imperial women began to assume her guise in portraits. Earliest among them, perhaps, was the wife of Augustus, the empress Livia.⁸ Once the imperial family set the trend, the practice was soon adopted by non-imperial women.⁹ Venus became one of the most popular deities with which women of both imperial and non-imperial rank desired identification in the first few centuries of our era.

There were several well known statue types of Venus, recognizable by pose alone or by attribute carried and clothing worn. Roman women selected the body types for portrait statues according to the particular virtues with which they wished to be identified. The simplest of these was perhaps beauty, for a portrait head on a body of Venus was always sure to be pleasing to the eye. Livia was associated with types of this sort, such as the

Capitoline Aphrodite.¹⁰ The Venus Anadyomene was another type recognized for its physical beauty, as seen in an example from Praeneste that carries the portrait head of an older woman, a seeming mismatch to modern viewers.¹¹ Later, Venus began to represent virtues beyond physical beauty; those virtues, in fact, that were much valued in (and desirable for) a proper Roman matron. These were chastity, piety, modesty, and loyalty, which related to the role of ideal wife and mother in a family setting. One statue type of Venus was particularly favored to represent these virtues: the Louvre-Naples type.

Honorary statues in the guise of Venus were appropriate in a number of Roman contexts¹² and were often displayed in public spaces such as *fora*.¹³ Body types of Venus were quickly adopted into the funerary realm and became favorites for funerary portrait statues, especially in the second and third centuries of our era.¹⁴ In this context, a woman might be remembered eternally for possessing the virtues so highly regarded by the Romans. Such funerary portrait statues linked the mortal woman with the goddess who possessed these ideal traits. The use of known body types for such statues provided immediately recognizable visual statements to passersby.¹⁵

The Providence piece may have been an example of such an honorary portrait, as indicated by the fitted head, now missing. Such a use is further suggested by a slight adaptation made to her garment, which covers the left breast.¹⁶ This differs from the Louvre-Naples type, in which the garment slips off the shoulder, baring the breast.¹⁷ It also makes it likely that if the Providence statue were a funerary portrait, this piece was a non-imperial commission. In their private funerary statuary, nonaristocratic women more often rejected the heroic nudity employed in imperial circles. This was especially true in the first two centuries of our era.¹⁸ Similar adaptations providing comparable modesty appear predominantly in the many examples of the Louvre-Naples type dating to the Trajanic (AD 98–117), Hadrianic (AD 117–138), and Antonine (AD 138–192) periods,¹⁹ further confirming a second-century date (after a fifth-century BC prototype) for the Providence sculpture.²⁰

CRISPIN CORRADO GOULET



Exh. no 13 FEMALE FIGURE (23.351) Photograph by A. Romano.

8 Matheson, *op. cit.*, p. 184.

9 D.E.E. Kleiner, *Roman Sculpture*. New Haven: 1992, p. 281.

10 On Livia portraits, see R. Winkes, *Livia, Octavia, Iulia*. Louvain: 1996.

11 Matheson, *op. cit.*, pp. 185, 189.

12 M. Marvin, "Copying in Roman Sculpture: The Replica Series," in K. Preciado, ed., *Retaining the Original: Multiple Originals, Copies and Reproductions* (Studies in the History of Art, vol. 20). Washington, DC: 1989, p. 36.

13 A. Oliver, "Honors to Romans: Bronze Portraits," in C. C. Mattusch, ed., *The Fire of Hephaistos: Large Classical Bronzes from North American Collections*. Cambridge (MA): 1996, p. 138 ff.

14 Kleiner, *op. cit.*, p. 281. Venus was in fact the most popular female deity represented in this realm, as attested by the number of extant examples of the type, followed by others such as Alcestis, Juno, Ceres and Cybele, and Fortuna.

15 E. K. Gazda, "Roman Sculpture and the Ethos of Emulation: Reconsidering Repetition" in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology*, vol. 97 (1995), p. 138. Like representations of the wounded Amazon (see pp. 26–27 in *Rethinking the Romans*), this piece illustrates well the way in which sculptures based on earlier Greek works assumed new meanings once adopted into Roman contexts.

16 The piece differs in dress from the Louvre-Naples type, as discussed by M. Bieber in a letter of June 12, 1968, in the RISD Museum curatorial files.

17 Cf. Brinke, *op. cit.*, p. 19 and cat. no. 3.

18 Kleiner, *op. cit.*, p. 281. These women "may not have shared the desire of their aristocratic counterparts to be depicted without their clothes."

19 Cf. Brinke, *op. cit.*, all with covered breast: cat. no. 24 and p. 35, a Trajanic/Hadrianic example; cat. no. 32 and p. 41, Trajanic; cat. no. 39 and p. 46, Antonine; and cat. no. 43 and p. 49, Antonine.

20 Indeed B. S. Ridgway noted the similarity in the rendering of folds in the Providence piece's garments to that on a statue from Ostia of Trajanic date; Ridgway, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

RETHINKING THE ROMANS

NEW VIEWS OF ANCIENT SCULPTURE

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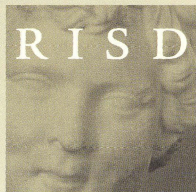
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